

CONSENT AND GENDER NORMS FROM CHILDREN'S PERSPECTIVE





Acknowledgment

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This project aims to contribute to a stronger, more accountable civil society ecosystem in which children, particularly girls and those facing multiple forms of marginalization, are empowered to meaningfully claim their rights and influence decisions affecting their lives. Grounded in the current child rights context in Kosovo, the project responds to persistent gaps between existing legal and policy frameworks and their weak and uneven implementation, which disproportionately affect marginalized groups such as Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian girls, children with disabilities, and children living in poverty or rural areas. By addressing gender norms, socio-economic barriers, and institutional limitations that restrict access to education, health, protection services, and participation, the project seeks to expand both the capacity and the civic space of civil society actors, including children themselves, to monitor, report on, and advocate for the effective realization of children’s rights in Kosovo.

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Kosovar Gender Studies Center (KGSC) www.kgscenter.net was founded in 2003 and has since become a leader in conducting research on gender issues and developing gender studies in Kosovo. KGSC as an organization whose mission is to integrate the gender perspective into all analyses, programs, and policies of all sectors of Kosovar society, has been a voice since its establishment at the central and local level, in the production of contextualized feminist knowledge, documenting the history of political activism of women, and the promotion of feminist activism among younger generations. The mission of the KGSC is the integration of the gender perspective in all spheres of life, as well as the development and

implementation of inclusive public policies through advocacy based on gender analysis.

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Executive Summary

Adolescence is a critical period during which gender norms, attitudes towards consent, and support-seeking behaviours are formed. Understanding children's perspectives is essential for developing evidence-based policies and programmes that promote gender equality, prevent violence and strengthen child protection systems. This study examines how adolescents aged 16 to 18 in Kosovo understand gender norms, consent, online safety, and the support available to them, drawing on a mixed-methods approach, combining a quantitative survey of **404 adolescents** with two focus group discussions. Its central finding is that traditional and patriarchal norms remain deeply influential, yet increasingly coexist with egalitarian aspirations and a clear awareness of gender inequality - and that girls and boys read the same gendered landscape from very different positions. Girls were more likely to describe experiencing these constraints directly, while boys more often described observing them.



Although adolescents demonstrated encouraging levels of awareness regarding consent and gender inequality, the findings also reveal persistent misconceptions, unequal experiences of online harm, and limited trust in formal reporting mechanisms.

Across every theme, the factor that most decisively shapes whether children seek help is trust. Taken together, the findings provide an evidence base for the next phase of research, advocacy, and policy engagement - pointing to the value of engaging both boys and girls, strengthening consent and digital-safety education, making reporting channels confidential and child-friendly, and supporting families to respond with support rather than blame.





Key Findings

- Traditional gender roles dominate: **71.5%** of the respondents agree a man's primary role is to earn money and a woman's primary role is to care for the home, and male respondents are consistently more traditional than female respondents across almost every measure.
- Male authority and toughness are widely endorsed: **58.8%** agree the father should have the final say in important household decisions, more than half consider men as better political leaders, **52.0%** say being a "real man" requires toughness, and **66.9%** agree a man should defend his reputation if insulted.
- Expectations are sharply gendered: **58.2%** agree it is worse for a girl than a boy to have many dating partners; boys are judged mainly as future providers and leaders, while girls face a double burden of domestic competence, education, and chastity.
- Yet attitudes are shifting: about two-thirds support boys and girls sharing housework equally and pursuing higher education, **54.4%** see gender inequality as a serious problem, and **63.9%** recognize that rigid masculinity also harms boys and men.
- Girls' freedom is tightly monitored: household rules are pervasive - **74.8%** must ask permission before meeting friends and **66.2%** have a curfew - and both the survey and focus groups show girls face closer control of their movements than boys.
- Understanding of consent is uneven: just over half (**53%**) hold an affirmative understanding, but a sizeable minority - more often boys - equate silence with agreement or assume consent is automatic within a relationship.
- Legal awareness outpaces education: **80.8%** know that sharing an intimate image without permission is a crime and **70.4%** know the age of consent, yet fewer than half (**44%**) have received any school lesson on consent, relationships, or rights.

- Online harassment is common and gendered: around a quarter reported that they have experienced some form of online harassment, from hurtful comments to the non-consensual sharing of private images, with girls facing more severe, reputation-based harm.
- Reporting is deterred by shame and distrust: fear of peer mockery (**47.7%**) is the leading barrier, around **40%** doubt school confidentiality, police seriousness, or that reporting changes anything, and anonymous reporting (**54.1%**) is the most requested improvement.
- Support exists but goes unused: while **71.8%** know their school has support staff, roughly three-quarters have never spoken with one, and low confidence in confidentiality is the weakest link and one of the main barriers to reporting.
- Family is the first port of call and source of support: children confide more readily in their mother (**81.9%**) than their father (**75.1%**), while girls are notably more hesitant with fathers, and everyday conversations are often brief and infrequent.

Trust is the decisive factor: across every theme, whether children seek help depends less on awareness than on how confidential, approachable, and non-judgmental the adults and institutions they rely on.



Introduction

Children's attitudes, values, and behaviors take shape throughout their development, particularly during adolescence. As they grow and develop, they navigate a greater independence, while relationships and interactions in both online and offline environment influence their experiences. During this period, children develop their understanding of gender roles, consent, healthy relationships and personal boundaries while becoming more exposed to social expectations, peer influence and digital environments. The experiences and attitudes formed during adolescence have long-term implications for gender equality, protection from violence, mental well-being and participation in society.

Gender norms play a particularly significant role during childhood, particularly adolescence. Expectations surrounding femininity and masculinity influence how girls and boys experience family life, education, friendships, relationships and opportunities for meaningful participation. While these expectations affect all adolescents, they do not affect them equally. Girls often experience greater restrictions on their autonomy, mobility and behaviour, while boys may face pressure to conform to traditional expectations related to strength, emotional expression, leadership and financial responsibility. Increasingly, these experiences extend into digital spaces, where opportunities for communication and participation coexist with new forms of online harassment, abuse and harmful gender stereotypes.

At the same time, adolescence presents an important opportunity to promote more equitable gender norms and strengthen protective factors that support children's healthy development. Families, schools, communities and institutions all play a critical role in fostering respectful relationships, encouraging help-seeking behaviours and ensuring that children feel safe, heard and supported. Understanding how adolescents themselves perceive these issues is therefore essential for designing policies and programmes that are responsive to their realities and needs.

Despite growing attention to children's rights, gender equality and online safety in Kosovo, limited evidence exists on how adolescents themselves understand and experience these issues. Existing research often focuses on institutional responses

or adult perspectives, while children's own voices remain underrepresented. Consistent with the principles of meaningful child participation, this study places adolescents' perspectives at the centre of the analysis, recognising children as rights-holders whose experiences and views are essential for developing effective, child-centred and gender-responsive policies and programmes. By examining both the similarities and differences in how girls and boys experience gender norms, consent, online safety and help-seeking, the study seeks to contribute to a more nuanced understanding of the challenges and opportunities facing adolescents in Kosovo.

The findings are intended to inform policy development, advocacy and programming aimed at strengthening children's rights, promoting gender equality and improving child protection systems in Kosovo. They also seek to support public institutions, educational institutions, civil society organisations and other stakeholders in developing interventions that are evidence-based, child-centred and gender-responsive.

This report presents the findings of a mixed-methods study combining a quantitative survey with 404 adolescents aged 16-18 and qualitative focus group discussions with adolescent girls and boys. The report first outlines the study methodology, followed by the presentation of findings across the main thematic areas, and concludes with recommendations for institutions and stakeholders responsible for advancing children's rights, gender equality and protection from violence in Kosovo.

■ Policy and Legal Framework

The promotion of gender equality, children's rights and protection from violence is grounded in a comprehensive international and national legal and policy framework that recognises children as rights-holders¹ and places an obligation on institutions to create safe, inclusive and enabling environments for their development. The themes explored in this study—including gender norms, consent, online safety, family communication and help-seeking—are closely linked to these commitments and contribute to ongoing efforts to strengthen evidence-based policies and programmes for adolescents in Kosovo.

¹ United Nations General Assembly. (1989). Convention on the Rights of the Child, Articles 2, 3, 12 and 19.

At the international level, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)² provides the primary framework for protecting the rights of all children. The Convention recognises every child's right to protection from all forms of violence, abuse and exploitation, to express their views freely in matters affecting them, to access appropriate information, and to develop in environments that promote their dignity, well-being and best interests. The Committee on the Rights of the Child further elaborates these principles in General Comment No. 20 on the implementation of the rights of the child during adolescence,³ which recognises adolescence as a unique stage of development requiring specific measures to protect children's rights, promote gender equality, strengthen participation, and support adolescents in navigating evolving social relationships and digital environments. These principles are particularly relevant during adolescence, when children increasingly navigate relationships, identity formation and digital environments while developing greater independence and participation in society.

The study is further informed by General Comment No. 25 on Children's Rights in Relation to the Digital Environment,⁴ which recognises that digital technologies create important opportunities for learning, participation and communication while also exposing children to new forms of violence, exploitation and privacy risks. The General Comment calls on States to strengthen children's digital literacy, ensure safe online environments, protect children from online gender-based violence and abuse, safeguard children's privacy, and establish accessible, child-friendly reporting and support mechanisms. As adolescents increasingly navigate online environments, these principles provide an important framework for understanding both the opportunities and risks highlighted throughout this study.

Gender equality is further supported by international human rights standards, including the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)⁵ and the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing

² United Nations General Assembly. (1989). *Convention on the Rights of the Child*, adopted 20 November 1989, entered into force 2 September 1990, 1577 UNTS 3.

³ Committee on the Rights of the Child. (2016). General Comment No. 20 (2016) on the implementation of the rights of the child during adolescence. CRC/C/GC/20.

⁴ Committee on the Rights of the Child. (2021). General Comment No. 25 (2021) on children's rights in relation to the digital environment. CRC/C/GC/25.

⁵ United Nations General Assembly. (1979). *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women* (CEDAW).

and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (Istanbul Convention).⁶ These frameworks recognise that harmful gender stereotypes, unequal power relations and discriminatory social norms contribute to gender-based violence and inequality, and emphasise prevention through education, awareness-raising and coordinated institutional responses. They also highlight the importance of engaging both girls and boys in promoting gender equality and preventing violence from an early age.

At the national level, Kosovo has established an important legal and policy framework for protecting children's rights and promoting gender equality. The Constitution of the Republic of Kosovo⁷ guarantees equality before the law and provides for the direct applicability of key international human rights instruments. The Law on Child Protection⁸ establishes the responsibilities of public institutions to safeguard children from violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation, while the Law on Gender Equality⁹ provides the legal basis for advancing substantive gender equality across all sectors of society. In addition, the Law on Protection from Domestic Violence, Violence against Women and Gender-Based Violence¹⁰ strengthens institutional responsibilities for preventing and responding to gender-based violence through coordinated, survivor-centred and multi-sectoral approaches. The legal framework therefore places responsibilities on education, child protection, justice and other public institutions to prevent violence, respond to children's concerns and ensure children's participation in decisions affecting them.

Education also plays a central role within Kosovo's legal and policy framework for advancing children's rights and gender equality. Schools are recognised not only as places of learning but also as protective environments that contribute to children's social and emotional development, promote equality and inclusion, and support the early identification and referral of children experiencing violence or other protection concerns. These responsibilities align closely with the findings of this study, which highlight the important role of schools, teachers and school

⁶Council of Europe. (2011). Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (Istanbul Convention), CETS No. 210.

⁷Constitution of the Republic of Kosovo, Official Gazette of the Republic of Kosovo, No. 25/2008.

⁸Law No. 06/L-084 on Child Protection, Official Gazette of the Republic of Kosovo.

⁹Law No. 05/L-020 on Gender Equality, Official Gazette of the Republic of Kosovo.

¹⁰Law No. 08/L-185 on Prevention and Protection from Domestic Violence, Violence against Women and Gender-Based Violence, Official Gazette of the Republic of Kosovo.

psychologists in fostering trust, promoting respectful relationships and ensuring that children can safely seek support when needed.

Consistent with the principles of meaningful child participation¹¹ reflected in both international and national frameworks, this study adopts a child-rights and gender-responsive approach, recognising adolescents not only as beneficiaries of policies and programmes but also as rights-holders whose perspectives are essential for developing effective policies, services and interventions. By placing adolescents' voices at the centre of the analysis, the study contributes to a better understanding of how girls and boys experience gender norms, consent, online safety and help-seeking, while generating evidence to support more responsive laws, policies and programmes.

Taken together, these international and national commitments recognise that promoting gender equality and protecting children from violence requires coordinated action across education, child protection, justice, health, families and civil society. The findings presented in this report seek to contribute to these efforts by providing evidence that can inform policy development, institutional practice, advocacy and programming aimed at strengthening children's rights, promoting gender equality and creating safer environments in which all adolescents can thrive.

■ Study Objectives

The overall objective of this study was to examine adolescents' knowledge, attitudes and experiences related to gender norms, consent, online safety and help-seeking among adolescents aged 16–18 in Kosovo.

Specifically, the study aimed to:

- examine adolescents' attitudes towards gender norms and gender equality;
- assess adolescents' understanding of consent, healthy relationships and legal rights;
- explore adolescents' experiences of online safety, online harassment and reporting practices;
- understand adolescents' help-seeking behaviours, family communication and trust in formal and informal support systems;

¹¹ Committee on the Rights of the Child. (2009). *General Comment No. 12: The right of the child to be heard*. CRC/C/GC/12.

- identify gender differences in attitudes, experiences and reporting behaviours, and;
- generate evidence to inform policy development, advocacy and programming aimed at strengthening children's rights, gender equality and child protection in Kosovo.



Methodology

The study generates evidence-based insights into how gender norms, perceptions of consent, and institutional practices affect **children aged 16 to 18 in Kosovo**, with particular attention to girls and children from marginalized groups. UBO Consulting implemented a mixed-methods design combining a quantitative survey with qualitative focus group discussions, measuring the prevalence of attitudes and experiences while also exploring the motivations and social dynamics behind them.

Fieldwork was conducted between **18 and 29 May 2026**, guided throughout by a child-centered approach and by ethical and child-safeguarding standards agreed with KGSC during an inception phase, and informed by a desk review of relevant legislation, policies, and prior studies.

The survey followed a multi-stage stratified random sampling design, developed to ensure the representativeness of adolescents aged 16–18 across Kosovo. Sampling was stratified by region and by settlement type (urban and rural). Within each selected location, households were selected using a random-route (random-walk) procedure at a fixed interval, and in each selected household with an eligible child aged 16–18, one child was invited to participate. Gender and age quotas, together with dedicated sampling points in areas with a higher concentration of Roma, Ashkali, Egyptian, Bosniak, Gorani, Turkish and Kosovo Serb communities, ensured balanced representation across key groups.

A total of 404 children were interviewed, and only after informed consent and assent - including parental or guardian consent, given that participants were minors - had been completed, with confidentiality protected and data stored securely throughout. At a total sample of 404, the results carry a margin of error of approximately $\pm 5\%$ at the 95% confidence level for population-level estimates. Table 1 presents the distribution of completed interviews by municipality and ethnicity.

Table 1. Distribution of interviews per municipality by ethnicity

Municipality	Albanian	Serb	Other	Total
Prishtinë	50	0	4	54
Deçan	7	0	2	9
Dragash	3	0	6	9
Ferizaj	28	0	3	31
Fushë Kosovë	11	0	0	11
Gjakova	18	0	0	18
Gjilan	18	0	0	18
Drenas	13	0	0	13
Graçanicë	2	3	0	5
Hani i Elezit	3	0	0	3
Istog	8	0	0	8
Junik	0	0	0	0
Kaçanik	7	0	0	7
Kamenicë	4	0	0	4
Klinë	8	0	0	8
Leposaviq	0	5	0	5
Lipjan	16	0	4	20
Malishevë	11	0	0	11
Mamushë	0	0	2	2
Mitrovicë	17	0	1	18
Novobërdë	1	0	0	1
Obiliq	4	0	0	4
Peja	20	0	5	25
Podujeva	20	0	0	20
Prizren	26	0	4	30
Rahovec	11	0	0	11
Skenderaj	10	0	0	10
Suhareka	10	0	0	10
Shtërpca	2	3	0	5
Shtime	7	0	0	7
Viti	7	0	0	7
Vushtrri	15	0	0	15
Zubin Potok	0	5	0	5
Total	357	16	31	404

Data were collected in person through **Computer-Assisted Personal Interviewing (CAPI)**, with trained enumerators administering a structured questionnaire on tablets via the KoboToolbox platform. Developed in collaboration with KGSC, the questionnaire was age-appropriate, gender-sensitive, and child-

friendly, prepared in English and translated into Albanian and Serbian using back-translation, and pilot tested before deployment. All enumerators and supervisors were trained beforehand on the questionnaire, interviewing techniques for adolescents, ethics, child safeguarding, and confidentiality.

The child-centered approach was operationalized at every stage of data collection. Before taking part, each child received clear, age-appropriate information about the purpose of the study, how their responses would be used and stored, who would see them, and the limits of confidentiality. Participation was strictly voluntary: children were free to decline any question, pause, or withdraw at any point without consequence, which was particularly important given the sensitive nature of topics such as consent and online harassment. Question wording, examples, and interview pacing were adapted to the age and maturity of adolescents, and enumerators were trained to create a respectful, non-judgmental environment in which children felt comfortable expressing themselves. Recruitment sought to include girls and boys equally and to reach children from marginalized communities. Throughout, fieldwork followed the child-safeguarding standards agreed with KGSC: no names or identifying details were published, and any disclosure of harm or risk was handled through pre-agreed referral procedures.



Data quality was assured through digital validation tools - GPS tagging, time stamps, skip logic, and audit trails - alongside real-time supervision and back-checking of completed interviews. The data were then cleaned in SPSS and weighted by age, gender, ethnicity and residence to match the real proportions of the 16–18 population in Kosovo, and analyzed using descriptive statistics, including frequency distributions and cross-tabulations disaggregated by gender. Unless otherwise stated, all figures presented in this report are based on weighted data.

To complement the survey, **two (2) focus group discussions** - one with adolescent girls and one with adolescent boys - brought together 11 adolescents, from several municipalities (Prishtina, Peja, Ferizaj, and Kaçanik). The qualitative component was designed to capture children's own experiences and perspectives, enabling the study to better understand how adolescents interpret gender norms, consent, online safety and reporting beyond what can be measured through survey data alone. As with any

qualitative study of this scale, the focus groups are not statistically representative but add depth and explanation to the survey results. Separate FGDs with girls and boys allowed girls' and boys' experiences and perspectives to be analysed separately. Each lasted 60 to 90 minutes and followed a semi-structured guide. Both were held online via Zoom, following the recruitment process, during which participants expressed a preference for participating remotely. This was intended to support safer and more comfortable participation of children while discussing sensitive topics. With participants' consent, the discussions were recorded, transcribed, and analyzed thematically, with girls' and boys' accounts kept separate and illustrated through anonymized quotations.

■ Limitations

Several limitations should be considered when interpreting the findings. Although the survey applied a stratified random sampling design with post-stratification weighting by age, gender, ethnicity and place of residence to reflect the real composition of the 16–18 population, household selection relied on a random-route (random-walk) procedure. As such, the design closely approximates, but does not perfectly replicate, strict probability sampling, and the findings are best understood as broadly representative of adolescents aged 16–18 in Kosovo, subject to the normal margins of error associated with survey research.

In addition, because the number of respondents from individual minority communities was small, the results cannot be reliably disaggregated for any single minority community. The study also did not include children with disabilities, as no participants with disabilities took part in either the survey or the focus group discussions; consequently, the findings do not capture the specific experiences and perspectives of adolescents with disabilities. As the data rely primarily on self-reported attitudes and experiences, responses may also have been influenced by social desirability and recall bias, particularly given the sensitive nature of topics such as consent, gender norms and online harassment; this was mitigated through voluntary and confidential participation, trained enumerators, and a private, non-judgmental interview setting. Finally, the qualitative component involved a small number of participants across two online focus group discussions and was intended to provide depth and context rather than statistical generalization. Combining quantitative and qualitative methods nonetheless strengthened the interpretation of findings by allowing children's experiences and perspectives to complement the survey results.



Survey Findings

■ Demographic and Socioeconomic Profile of Respondents

Establishing a clear profile of the respondents helps situate the findings presented in the following sections. The survey included 404 adolescents aged 16 to 18, with a near-even distribution by gender (51.8% boys and 48.2% girls) and age (33.7% aged 16, 32.8% aged 17 and 33.5% aged 18). Respondents came from both urban and rural areas, although the sample was predominantly rural (59.5%, compared with 40.5% living in urban areas). The majority identified as Albanian (89.6%), while 4.9% identified as Serbian and 5.6% belonged to other communities. Given the relatively small number of respondents from individual minority communities, findings cannot be reliably disaggregated or generalized to any specific minority community.

The respondents represent different educational pathways, with most attending general upper-secondary education (57.1%) or vocational upper-secondary education (32.4%). A smaller proportion attended other types of upper-secondary schools or were no longer enrolled in education. This distinction is relevant because educational pathways may shape adolescents' daily experiences, future opportunities, access to information and expectations regarding further education and employment. The educational backgrounds of parents also varied. Upper-secondary education was the most common highest level of education reported for both mothers (43.2%) and fathers (54.5%), while 15.9% of mothers and 24.1% of fathers had completed post-secondary or higher education. At the same time, 37.9% of mothers and 17.8% of fathers had completed lower-secondary education or less. These differences are relevant because parental education can influence educational aspirations, access to information and resources, and expectations regarding children's future opportunities.

The employment profile of parents provides further insight into the household and gendered environments in which respondents are growing up. While 54.3% of respondents identified their mother as a full-time homemaker, 39.4%

reported that their mother was engaged in full-time, part-time or occasional paid work or was self-employed. In contrast, 88.6% reported that their father was engaged in full-time, part-time or occasional paid work or was self-employed. This difference reflects distinct patterns of participation in paid and unpaid work within respondents' households and provides important context for interpreting adolescents' attitudes towards gender roles, family responsibilities and expectations regarding future work and family life.

Household economic circumstances also varied. While 25.4% of respondents reported that their families could afford everything they needed and more, the majority (54.6%) indicated that their families could afford what they needed but had little extra. A further 17.2% reported having enough for food and basic necessities but experiencing concerns about bills or occasional difficulty meeting essential costs. These differences in perceived economic security are relevant because household resources and financial stability may influence adolescents' access to opportunities, educational aspirations, future plans and everyday experiences.

Overall, the sample includes adolescents from different geographic settings, educational pathways and household socioeconomic circumstances, while maintaining a balanced distribution by age and gender. These characteristics provide important context for interpreting the findings that follow, particularly those concerning educational opportunities, economic circumstances, gender expectations and the social environments in which adolescents develop.

GENDER NORMS AND PERCEPTIONS

This section examines adolescents' attitudes towards gender roles and expectations, their perceptions of community norms for girls and boys, and the ways these expectations are reflected in household rules and parental monitoring. Together, these findings provide insight into how gender norms continue to shape the everyday experiences of adolescent girls and boys.

Those surveyed highlight the specific community expectations for what is expected of boys and what is expected of girls. Participants in the study additionally describe household rules and parental monitoring to illustrate how these standards are applied within the home. The following findings examine both adolescents' personal attitudes and their perceptions of wider community expectations, providing insight into how gender norms continue to shape everyday life for girls and boys.

The findings indicate that attitudes toward gender roles and expectations in the Kosovar society remain strongly shaped by traditional and patriarchal norms, particularly in relation to family roles, household decision-making, masculinity, and social expectations placed on girls and women. A large majority of respondents agree that men's primary role is to earn money while women's primary role is to care for the home and family, with 71.5% either strongly agreeing or agreeing with this statement. Similarly, 58.8% agree that the father should have the final say in important household decisions, suggesting that male authority within the family continues to be widely accepted. Thus, this suggests that many adolescents continue to grow up in environments where gender roles are understood as complementary rather than equal, with decision-making authority and financial responsibility remain primarily associated with men and caregiving associated with women. Such norms are likely to influence children's perceptions of relationships, decision-making and their own future roles within the family and society.

Traditional views are also evident in perceptions of leadership and masculinity. More than half of respondents agree that men generally make better political

leaders than women, while 52% agree that being a “real man” requires toughness. In addition, 66.9% agree that a man should defend his reputation if insulted, reflecting the continued importance placed on masculine honor, strength, and social reputation. Gendered double standards are also visible, as 58.2% agree that it is worse for a girl than a boy to have many dating partners. Taken together, these findings show that traditional expectations continue to shape both girls’ and boys’ identities, although in different ways. While girls are more likely to be judged according to their behaviour and reputation, boys continue to experience expectations related to leadership, toughness and financial responsibility.

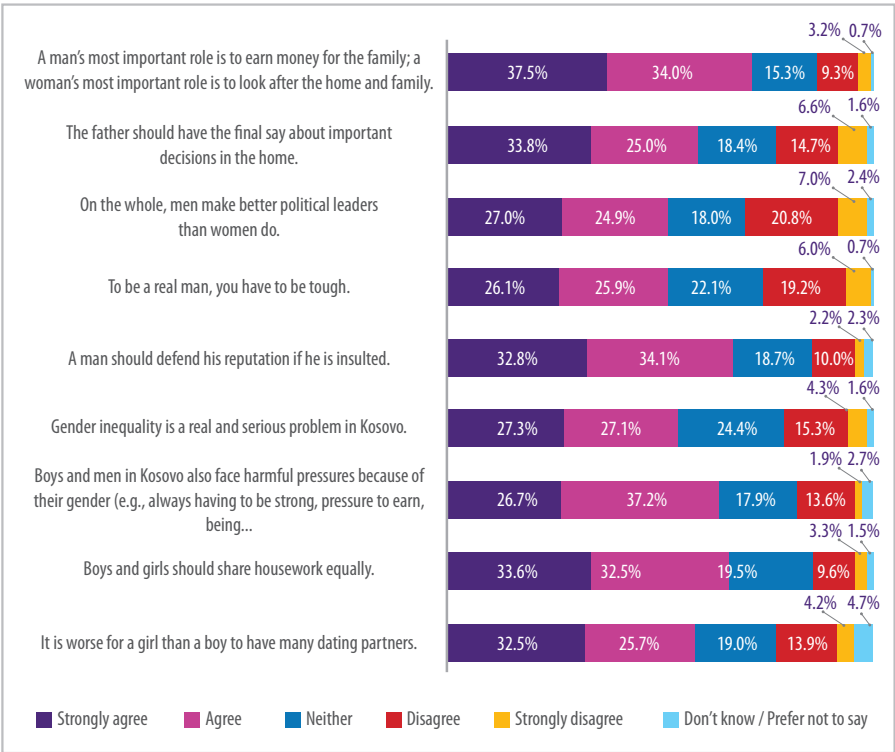
At the same time, the data also point to an important level of awareness around gender inequality and the harmful effects of gender expectations. A majority of respondents, 54.4%, agree that gender inequality is a real and serious problem in Kosovo’s society. Even more notably, 63.9% agree that boys and men also face harmful pressures because of their gender, such as expectations to be strong, earn money, or defend family reputation. This data are particularly important, as it highlights that harmful gender norms do not affect girls alone. While girls experience greater restrictions on autonomy and behaviour, boys also experience pressure to conform to rigid expectations related to masculinity, emotional expression and future economic responsibility.

The results also show support for more equal gender roles in the household. Around two-thirds of respondents, 66.1%, agree that boys and girls should share housework equally. This indicates that while traditional gender norms remain influential, there is also openness to more balanced and equitable expectations, particularly among surveyed adolescents or in relation to everyday family responsibilities. This may represent an important entry point for future educational and community-based interventions. Adolescence provides a critical opportunity to promote more equitable gender roles before traditional expectations become further reinforced in adulthood.

Overall, the findings point to a society in transition. While many traditional gender norms remain deeply influential, especially regarding men’s role as providers, fathers’ authority, male leadership, masculinity, and expectations placed on girls’ behavior, adolescents also demonstrate growing recognition of gender inequality and greater support for more equal relationships within families and communities. The coexistence of traditional and more egalitarian attitudes suggests that adolescence represents a critical period for challenging harmful gender norms

and strengthening gender-equitable socialization through families, schools and communities.

Figure 1. Attitudes about gender roles and expectations.



Disaggregating these attitudes by gender reveals a clear and consistent pattern: male respondents endorse traditional gender roles more strongly than female respondents on almost every statement. The divergence is widest on the core division of labour, where 81.4% of boys either strongly agree or agree that a man's main role is to earn money while a woman's is to look after the home and family, compared with 60.7% of girls. A similar gap appears on household authority, with 69.4% of boys agreeing that the father should have the final say in important decisions, against 47.4% of girls - indeed, 31.8% of girls actively disagree with paternal authority, more than double the 11.3% of boys who do.

The gender divide is equally pronounced on leadership and masculinity. Boys are

far more likely to agree that men make better political leaders (62.9% of boys versus 40.1% of girls), and girls are the only group where disagreement (42.7%) outweighs agreement on this statement. Boys also more readily endorse markers of traditional masculinity, agreeing that a “real man” must be tough (59.0% of boys versus 44.5% of girls) and that a man should defend his reputation if insulted (71.0% versus 62.4%). The double standard around dating is similarly gendered: 65.3% of boys, but 50.6% of girls, agree that it is worse for a girl than a boy to have many dating partners.

On the more progressive statements, however, the gap narrows or reverses. Girls are somewhat more likely than boys to recognise gender inequality as a real and serious problem (58.1% versus 50.8%) and notably more supportive of boys and girls sharing housework equally (72.5% of girls versus 60.3% of boys). Interestingly, boys are more likely than girls to agree that boys and men also face harmful gendered pressures (70.1% versus 57.2%), reflecting their own lived experience of those expectations. Taken together, the table shows girls holding consistently more egalitarian attitudes than boys, while both genders converge on the recognition that rigid expectations carry costs for boys and men as well.

This suggests that gender norms are not only transmitted across generations but are also reproduced differently among adolescent girls and boys themselves. While girls appear more likely to question traditional gender roles, many boys continue to express greater support for norms associated with male authority and traditional masculinity, highlighting adolescence as an important period for promoting more gender-equitable attitudes.

Table 2. Attitudes about gender roles and expectations. - By Gender

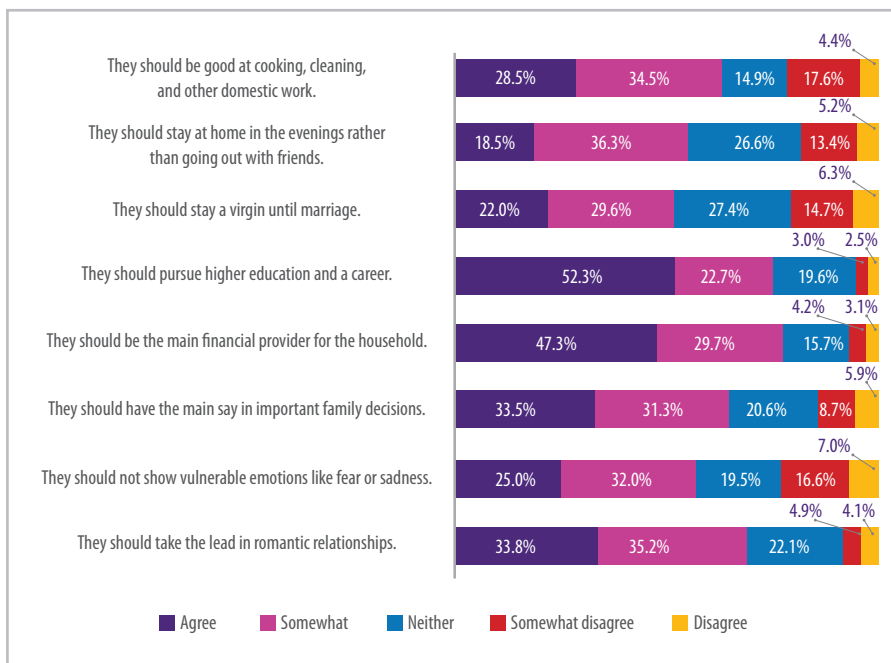
		Strongly agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know / Prefer not to say
A man's most important role is to earn money for the family; a woman's most important role is to look after the home and family.	Female	29.9%	30.8%	19.9%	13.0%	5.3%	1.1%
	Male	44.5%	36.9%	11.0%	5.9%	1.2%	0.4%
The father should have the final say about important decisions in the home.	Female	27.0%	20.4%	19.3%	22.2%	9.6%	1.5%
	Male	40.2%	29.2%	17.5%	7.5%	3.8%	1.7%
On the whole, men make better political leaders than women do.	Female	18.9%	21.2%	15.8%	30.1%	12.6%	1.5%
	Male	34.5%	28.4%	20.0%	12.2%	1.8%	3.2%
To be a real man, you have to be tough.	Female	20.5%	24.0%	23.5%	23.7%	7.2%	1.1%
	Male	31.3%	27.7%	20.8%	14.9%	4.9%	0.4%
A man should defend his reputation if he is insulted	Female	27.8%	34.6%	19.0%	13.5%	3.0%	2.1%
	Male	37.5%	33.5%	18.3%	6.8%	1.7%	2.3%
Gender inequality is a real and serious problem in Kosovo.	Female	29.7%	28.4%	22.0%	15.9%	1.5%	2.4%
	Male	25.0%	25.8%	26.6%	14.8%	6.9%	0.8%
Boys and men in Kosovo also face harmful pressures because of their gender	Female	21.9%	35.3%	20.2%	16.8%	2.2%	3.6%
	Male	31.2%	38.9%	15.8%	10.7%	1.6%	1.9%
Boys and girls should share housework equally	Female	38.5%	34.0%	17.6%	6.1%	1.7%	2.1%
	Male	29.1%	31.2%	21.3%	12.8%	4.7%	0.9%
It is worse for a girl than a boy to have many dating partners	Female	26.9%	23.7%	20.8%	15.4%	5.3%	7.9%
	Male	37.8%	27.5%	17.3%	12.5%	3.2%	1.7%

Community expectations for boys cluster most strongly around economic and professional achievement. Pursuing higher education and a career is the single most widely endorsed expectation, with 52.3% of respondents agreeing, followed closely by the expectation that boys be the main financial provider for the household at 47.3%. The strength of these responses signals that boys continue to be defined primarily through their future role as earners and public actors, with near-universal backing for their education - only 2.5% disagree that boys should pursue higher education and a career.

Traditional authority remains a meaningful, if more moderate, expectation: 33.5% of respondents agree that boys should have the main say in important family decisions, extending the provider role into household leadership. Below this, agreement falls away for expectations tied to domestic competence and emotional restraint. Just 28.5% agree that boys should be good at cooking, cleaning, and other domestic work, 25.0% agree that boys should not show vulnerable emotions such as fear or sadness, and 22.0% agree that boys should stay a virgin until marriage.

Overall, the pattern shows boys being judged against a public-facing, breadwinner model rather than against domestic ability or personal conduct. While the expectation to suppress emotion and the demand for pre-marital chastity persist for a notable minority, they attract markedly less support than the economic and educational expectations, suggesting that the most rigid pressures on boys concentrate on provision, achievement, and authority.

Table 3. Community expectations - what is expected of boys



Broken down by gender, expectations for boys diverge most sharply on questions of authority. Combining “agree” and “somewhat agree” responses, 76.2% of boys endorse boys having the main say in important family decisions, compared with just 52.5% of girls - and girls are more than twice as likely to oppose this concentration of decision-making power in boys (20.0% versus 9.6% of boys). This mirrors the broader finding that boys more readily defend traditional male authority within the household.

Attitudes toward domestic work and emotional expression are also gendered, though in more nuanced ways. Girls are slightly more accepting of boys being good at cooking, cleaning, and other domestic work (65.0% support versus 61.3% of boys), and boys are noticeably more likely to reject this expectation outright (26.0% opposed versus 17.7% of girls). On emotional restraint, support is comparable across genders (58.0% of boys and 55.9% of girls agree that boys should not show vulnerable emotions), but girls are considerably more likely to disagree (28.0% versus 19.5%), signalling greater female resistance to the idea that boys must suppress feelings.

On the expectations tied to public achievement, the genders largely converge. Both boys and girls strongly back boys pursuing higher education and a career (78.0% of boys and 71.6% of girls) and being the main financial provider (78.2% and 75.8% respectively), and both broadly accept boys taking the lead in romantic relationships (70.8% of boys, 67.0% of girls). The overall picture is one in which boys reinforce boys' domestic authority and resist domestic responsibility, while girls hold more egalitarian views on housework and emotion yet remain wary of vesting too much decision-making power in boys. This suggests that girls may be more willing than boys to challenge traditional expectations surrounding masculinity and domestic roles.

Table 4. Community expectations - what is expected of boys - By Gender

		Agree	Some- what	Neither	Somewhat disagree	Disagree
They should be good at cooking, cleaning, and other domestic work.	Female	30.0%	35.0%	17.3%	14.1%	3.6%
	Male	27.2%	34.1%	12.7%	20.8%	5.2%
They should stay at home in the evenings rather than going out with friends.	Female	21.8%	38.2%	25.2%	11.1%	3.6%
	Male	15.5%	34.4%	27.9%	15.5%	6.7%
They should stay a virgin until marriage.	Female	20.0%	32.3%	32.2%	12.0%	3.5%
	Male	23.8%	27.1%	23.1%	17.2%	8.8%
They should pursue higher education and a career.	Female	53.8%	17.8%	23.5%	3.3%	1.6%
	Male	50.8%	27.2%	16.1%	2.7%	3.3%
They should be the main financial provider for the household.	Female	44.8%	31.0%	16.4%	4.5%	3.3%
	Male	49.6%	28.6%	15.1%	3.9%	2.8%
They should have the main say in important family decisions.	Female	28.0%	24.5%	27.5%	13.4%	6.6%
	Male	38.6%	37.6%	14.2%	4.3%	5.3%

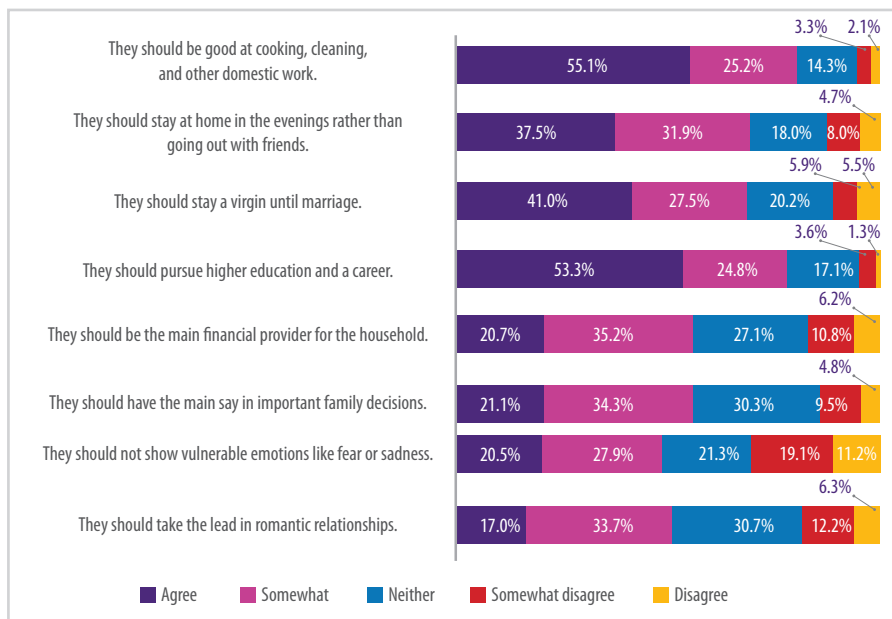
They should not show vulnerable emotions like fear or sadness.	Female	22.1%	33.8%	16.1%	19.7%	8.3%
	Male	27.7%	30.3%	22.6%	13.7%	5.8%
They should take the lead in romantic relationships.	Female	32.1%	34.9%	23.7%	5.6%	3.7%
	Male	35.4%	35.4%	20.6%	4.3%	4.4%

Expectations placed on girls reveal a distinctive double burden, combining traditional domestic demands with rising professional aspirations. The two most widely endorsed expectations are almost evenly matched: 55.1% of respondents agree that girls should be good at cooking, cleaning, and other domestic work, while 53.3% agree that girls should pursue higher education and a career. These findings illustrate that greater educational aspirations for girls have not necessarily been accompanied by a reduction in traditional domestic expectations. Rather than replacing traditional roles, new expectations appear to have been added to them, creating a “double burden” whereby girls are expected to succeed both within and outside the home.

Expectations around honour and sexual conduct remain markedly stronger for girls than for boys. Some 41.0% of respondents agree that girls should stay a virgin until marriage - nearly double the 22.0% recorded for boys - underscoring the persistence of a gendered double standard in which girls’ reputations are policed far more closely. Restrictions on movement are also evident, with only 4.7% of respondents willing to disagree that girls should stay at home in the evenings rather than going out with friends.

By contrast, expectations tied to leadership and economic provision are more tentative and concentrate in the “somewhat agree” category rather than firm agreement: 35.2% somewhat agree that girls should be the main financial provider and 34.3% somewhat agree that they should have the main say in important family decisions. Endorsement of girls taking the lead in romantic relationships is low, at 17.0%. Overall, the figure depicts girls as expected to be both domestically capable and well educated, yet still steered away from financial leadership, decision-making authority, and romantic initiative - roles that the data reserve more readily for boys.

Figure 2. Community expectations - what is expected of girls



When expectations for girls are examined by gender, girls emerge as the stronger advocates for girls' advancement and agency, reversing the pattern seen for boys. Girls are more likely than boys to endorse girls pursuing higher education and a career (59.3% of girls agree outright, against 47.7% of boys), and the gap is most striking on questions of power: combining "agree" and "somewhat agree," 60.7% of girls support girls being the main financial provider versus 51.4% of boys, and 62.2% of girls back girls having the main say in important family decisions, compared with just 49.2% of boys.

Nevertheless, the relatively high levels of agreement among girls themselves with certain traditional expectations suggest that gender norms continue to be internalized across both genders, highlighting the importance of addressing these norms through education and community engagement.

Men, by contrast, lend more support to expectations that restrict girls' autonomy and reinforce domestic roles. Some 72.5% of boys agree or somewhat agree that girls should stay at home in the evenings rather than going out with friends, against 66.0% of girls, and boys are also marginally more supportive of girls

being good at cooking, cleaning, and other domestic work (81.0% versus 79.6%). Expectations of pre-marital chastity are essentially identical across genders, with around 68% of both boys and girls endorsing that girls should stay a virgin until marriage.

On emotional expression the genders again differ in resistance rather than support: roughly half of both boys (47.6%) and girls (49.2%) agree that girls should not show vulnerable emotions, but girls are somewhat more likely to disagree (32.3% versus 28.5%). Taken together, the table suggests that girls envision broader economic and decision-making agency for girls while boys more readily support domestic confinement and restricted social freedom - a near mirror image of how the two genders position boys.

Table 5. Community expectations - what is expected of girls - By Gender

		Agree	Somewhat	Neither	Somewhat disagree	Disagree
They should be good at cooking, cleaning, and other domestic work.	Female	50.9%	28.7%	14.6%	3.7%	2.2%
	Male	59.0%	22.0%	14.0%	2.9%	2.1%
They should stay at home in the evenings rather than going out with friends	Female	32.7%	33.3%	19.7%	8.7%	5.6%
	Male	42.0%	30.5%	16.3%	7.3%	3.9%
They should stay a virgin until marriage.	Female	39.2%	29.1%	18.8%	7.5%	5.4%
	Male	42.7%	25.9%	21.5%	4.5%	5.5%
They should pursue higher education and a career	Female	59.3%	20.1%	15.0%	4.5%	1.0%
	Male	47.7%	29.2%	19.0%	2.6%	1.5%
They should be the main financial provider for the household	Female	19.4%	41.3%	26.7%	8.2%	4.4%
	Male	21.8%	29.6%	27.5%	13.2%	7.9%
They should have the main say in important family decisions	Female	25.4%	36.8%	26.3%	7.6%	3.9%
	Male	17.1%	32.1%	34.0%	11.2%	5.7%

They should not show vulnerable emotions like fear or sadness	Female	19.4%	29.8%	18.5%	21.0%	11.3%
	Male	21.5%	26.1%	23.9%	17.4%	11.1%
They should take the lead in romantic relationships	Female	16.9%	33.6%	30.8%	11.2%	7.5%
	Male	17.0%	33.9%	30.7%	13.2%	5.2%

The quantitative findings were further explored through focus group discussions, which provided important insight into how adolescents themselves understand and experience these gender norms in their everyday lives.

The focus group discussions revealed the persistence of traditional gender roles. Girls and boys recognized the common expectation that men should earn money and women should care for the home and family, but girls challenged this model more directly - rejecting it as a limit on women's freedom, financial independence, and decision-making - while boys tended to describe it as an observed social pattern.

Gendered freedom emerged as one of the strongest themes. Girls and boys said that boys have more freedom to go out, come home later, move around, and socialize, while girls face stronger restrictions, earlier curfews, and more control over their movements and sometimes their phones. Girls described this as a direct, personal limitation in everyday life, while boys recognized it as an inequality they observe and partly understand.



“This thing bothers me a lot even in my family because, for example, the boy always has the advantages, he can go out, he can come home later, and that means there is no restriction for him at all.”

- A girl, aged 16–18

Boys described the male role as connected to earning money, developing a career, and carrying responsibility for the family's financial stability, while associating girls with expectations around behavior, manners, housework, and reputation. Many also said both men and women should work, contribute financially, and



share housework and childcare, recognizing traditional expectations without treating them as the only possible model.



“I think that from his family, from his parents, and from the circle around him, much greater expectations are expected, for example, to achieve much more in a career and to become as capable as possible for a not very distant future. Whereas regarding girls in Kosovo, I think there is a kind of mentality that is more about taking care of behavior.”

- A boy, aged 16–18

The discussions also suggested that attitudes toward girls' freedom may be changing: families may now exert less direct control over major decisions such as marriage or career, even as stricter rules persist in everyday life around going out, curfews, household duties, and reputation.

Household rules reported by respondents point to a high degree of parental supervision, concentrated above all on children's whereabouts and social contacts. The most common rule by a wide margin is the requirement to ask permission before meeting friends outside school hours, which applies to 74.8% of respondents. Curfews are also widespread, with 66.2% reporting a set time by which they must be home, and over half (54.3%) say their parents expect them to share their location when they are out. Together these figures describe an environment in which adolescents' movements and social lives are closely tracked.

Although many of these rules apply to all adolescents, focus group discussions suggest that they are experienced differently by girls and boys. Girls consistently described greater restrictions on their mobility, social interactions and autonomy, indicating that household monitoring is not gender-neutral but shaped by broader social expectations regarding girls' behaviour and family reputation.

Monitoring is more contested, however, when it comes to independent movement and digital privacy. Opinion is almost evenly split on going out alone after dark, with 45.4% of respondents permitted to do so on both weekdays and weekends, indicating that a substantial share of children retain some autonomy over their evenings. Direct surveillance of digital life is the least common rule: only 30.2% report that their parents check their phone or social media accounts.

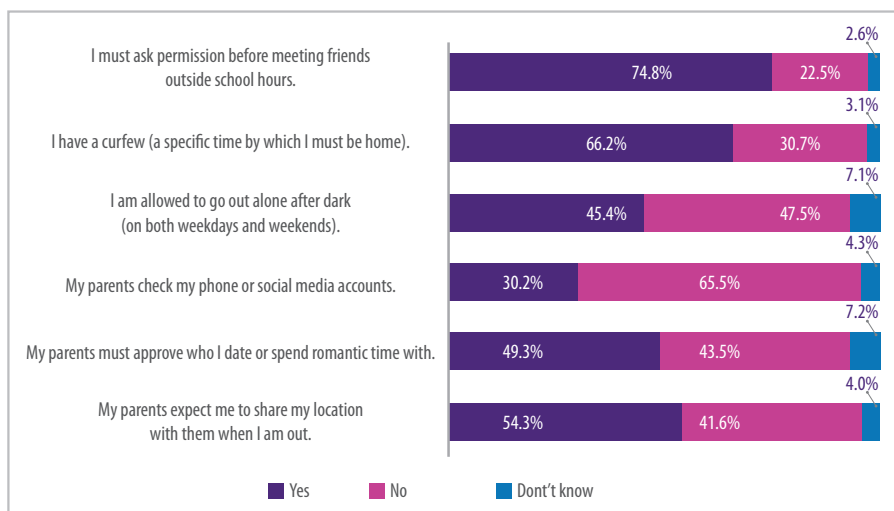


A further dimension of household rules concerns children's romantic lives. Nearly half of respondents (49.3%) report that their parents must approve who they date or spend romantic time with, while 43.5% face no such requirement and 7.2% were unsure - making this one of the more evenly divided rules and showing that parental oversight in many homes extends beyond movements and social contacts into adolescents' personal relationships. Uncertainty is also relatively high around going out alone after dark (7.1% answering "don't know"), suggesting that, unlike the near-universal clarity of curfews and permission rules, expectations about evening independence and romantic relationships are less firmly defined in some households.

The overall pattern suggests that parental control in Kosovo focuses more on physical whereabouts and social access than on digital privacy, with a notable minority of adolescents exercising greater independence.

Differences in household expectations and freedom of movement may influence adolescents' opportunities to participate equally in education, social life and community activities, reinforcing unequal gender norms during a formative stage of development.

Figure 3. Household rules and parental monitoring.



Across both the quantitative and qualitative findings, gender norms emerge not simply as individual beliefs but as social expectations that shape adolescents' everyday experiences, relationships and future aspirations. While girls more frequently describe restrictions on autonomy and behaviour, boys describe pressures related to leadership, financial responsibility and masculinity. These findings suggest that promoting gender equality requires addressing the expectations placed on both girls and boys while recognising that they experience these norms in different ways.



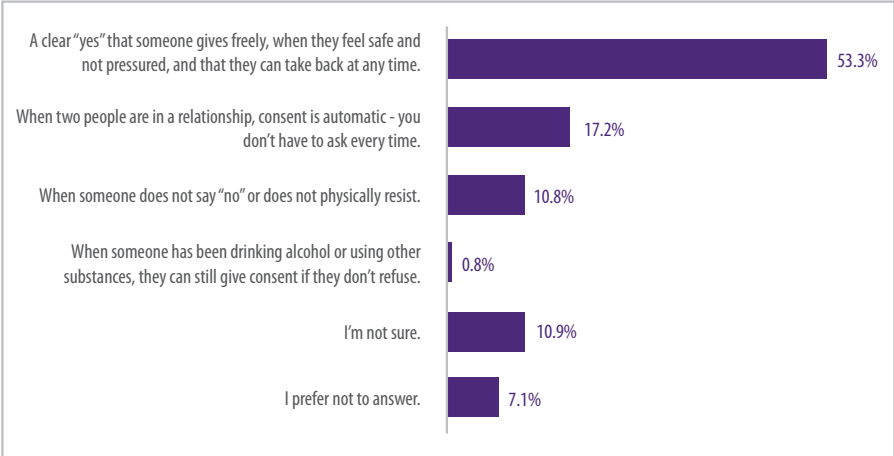
CONSENT-KNOWLEDGE, ATTITUDES, EXPERIENCES

Understanding how children aged 16-18 in Kosovo define and perceive consent provides critical insight into broader social norms. Personal attitudes toward pressure and responsibility, notably, often reflect the specific expectations found within local peer groups. Additionally, knowledge regarding legal rights and the role of education varies significantly among those surveyed in the study.

Most respondents demonstrate a sound, affirmative understanding of consent. A majority - 53.3% - define consent as a clear “yes” that is given freely, when a person feels safe and unpressured, and that can be withdrawn at any time, indicating that the affirmative, revocable model of consent has taken hold among most children surveyed. Reassuringly, only 0.8% endorse the dangerous misconception that a person under the influence of alcohol or other substances can still consent simply by not refusing.

Nonetheless, a substantial minority hold definitions that leave room for coercion. Some 17.2% believe that consent is automatic between people in a relationship and need not be sought every time, and a further 10.8% equate consent with the mere absence of a “no” or physical resistance - together more than a quarter of respondents. An additional 10.9% were unsure and 7.1% preferred not to answer. These findings indicate that although most adolescents understand the core principles of consent, misconceptions about refusal and relationships remain common. Such misunderstandings may increase the risk of coercion, normalise unequal power dynamics and undermine adolescents’ ability to recognise situations where consent has not been freely given.

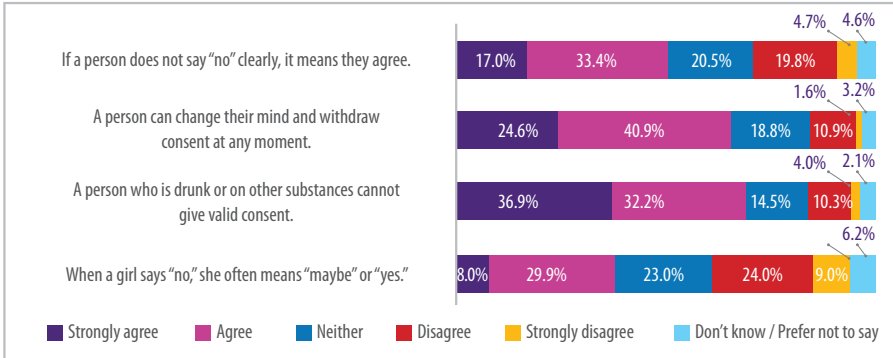
Figure 4. What does “consent” mean to you?



The findings further show that respondents generally recognize key principles related to consent, but some misconceptions remain present. A majority agree that consent can be withdrawn at any moment, with 40.9% agreeing and 24.6% strongly agreeing with this statement. Similarly, there is broad agreement that a person who is drunk or under the influence of other substances cannot give valid consent, supported by 36.9% who strongly agree and 32.2% who agree.

However, the data also indicate that problematic views about consent remain evident. In particular, 50.4% of respondents agree or strongly agree that if a person does not clearly say “no,” this means they agree. In addition, 37.9% agree or strongly agree that when a girl says “no,” she often means “maybe” or “yes.” These findings suggest that while many respondents understand that consent can be withdrawn and that intoxication affects the ability to give valid consent, there is still a need to strengthen awareness that consent must be clear, voluntary, and respected at all times. Effective consent education should also challenge social norms surrounding communication, relationships and gender stereotypes that may contribute to the misinterpretation of consent, including by challenging harmful gender stereotypes and promoting affirmative consent.

Figure 5. Attitudes about consent, pressure, and responsibility.



When disaggregated by gender, the data show some differences in how boys and girls interpret situations involving ambiguity or refusal. Boys are more likely than girls to agree that if a person does not clearly say "no," this means they agree, with 56.2% of boys agreeing or strongly agreeing compared to 44.3% of girls. Girls, on the other hand, are more likely to reject this statement, with 31.7% disagreeing or strongly disagreeing compared to 17.8% of boys. Although the overall gender differences are modest, the greater acceptance among boys of statements that blur the meaning of refusal highlights the importance of engaging boys and young men in discussions about respectful relationships, communication and affirmative consent.

A similar pattern is observed in relation to the statement that when a girl says "no," she often means "maybe" or "yes." Agreement is higher among boys, at 41.9%, compared to 33.7% among girls. Girls are also more likely to disagree with this statement, with 38.5% disagreeing or strongly disagreeing, compared to 27.8% of boys. These findings suggest that boys are somewhat more likely to hold views that may leave room for misinterpreting refusal or unclear communication.

At the same time, gender differences are much smaller when it comes to broader principles of consent. Similar shares of boys and girls agree that consent can be withdrawn at any moment, at 66.8% among boys and 64.0% among girls. Agreement is also closely aligned on the view that a person who is drunk or under the influence of other substances cannot give valid consent, with 70.0% of boys and 68.2% of girls agreeing or strongly agreeing. Overall, the gender gap appears mainly in how ambiguity and refusal are interpreted, rather than in general recognition of consent as an important principle.

Table 6. Attitudes about consent, pressure, and responsibility. - By Gender

		Strongly agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know / Prefer not to say
If a person does not say "no" clearly, it means they agree.	Female	16.6%	27.7%	19.8%	23.7%	8.0%	4.2%
	Male	17.5%	38.7%	21.1%	16.1%	1.7%	4.9%
A person can change their mind and withdraw consent at any moment.	Female	28.3%	35.7%	17.9%	12.6%	1.0%	4.4%
	Male	21.1%	45.7%	19.6%	9.3%	2.2%	2.0%
A person who is drunk or on other substances cannot give valid consent.	Female	37.2%	31.0%	16.1%	9.0%	1.6%	5.1%
	Male	36.6%	33.4%	13.1%	11.5%	2.5%	3.0%
When a girl says "no," she often means "maybe" or "yes."	Female	8.2%	25.5%	21.2%	25.7%	12.8%	6.7%
	Male	7.8%	34.1%	24.6%	22.4%	5.4%	5.7%

The discussions showed clear differences in how girls and boys understood consent. Girls described it as personal willingness, sincerity, respect, mutual understanding, and freedom from pressure, while boys described it more in terms of liking, attraction, and romantic interest. Both recognized indirect communication, but girls gave more attention to discomfort, pressure, and signs that someone is not okay.

Girls defined consent as something that protects respect between people and prevents unfair situations, and they rejected the idea that asking for consent ruins the moment - describing it instead as a sign of respect that makes the environment safer.



"I think it is very important to have approval or consent because, first of all, it protects respect between all people and prevents some situations that are, you know, unfair."

- A girl, aged 16-18

Boys, by contrast, discussed consent in terms of whether someone likes another person and how that interest is expressed, often through indirect signals such as mutual friends, social media, distancing, or not responding. While they recognized rejection or lack of interest, they did not clearly define consent in terms of rights, boundaries, and explicit agreement.

“I think a main point is through a mutual friend. I think that will be the easiest way to transmit it, I mean, to the other person.”
- A boy, aged 16–18

These differences matter for education: both groups need clearer, more structured consent education that uses the language boys already understand, while strengthening the concepts of boundaries, explicit agreement, respect for silence, and the recognition of discomfort.

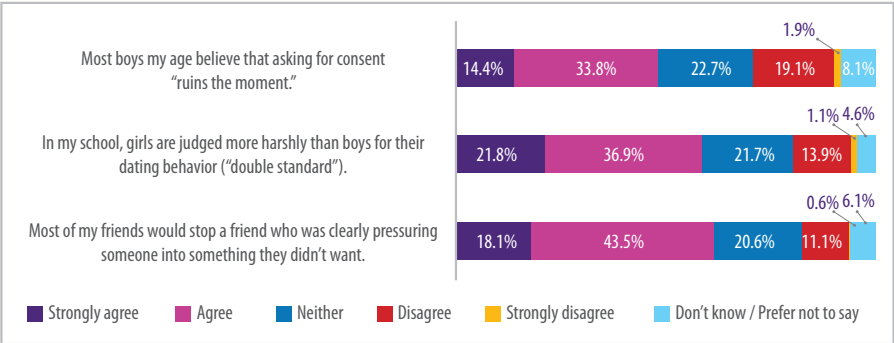
The findings show that peer norms around consent and dating include both concerning attitudes and positive signs of support. Nearly half of respondents agree or strongly agree that most boys their age believe asking for consent “ruins the moment” (48.2%). This suggests that some children perceive consent-seeking as something that may be dismissed or seen negatively within peer groups. Peer norms may also discourage children from seeking explicit consent, even when they understand its importance. Addressing peer norms therefore represents an important component of consent education alongside improving individual knowledge.

The data also point to the presence of gendered double standards. A majority of respondents, 58.7%, agree or strongly agree that girls in their school are judged more harshly than boys for their dating behaviour. This indicates that many children recognize unequal expectations placed on girls compared to boys, even though such norms continue to be widely accepted within society.

At the same time, the results show a positive peer-protection norm. A clear majority, 61.6%, agree or strongly agree that most of their friends would stop a friend who was clearly pressuring someone into something they did not want. This suggests that while harmful peer attitudes are still present, there is also

a meaningful willingness among peers to intervene, which could be further strengthened through education and awareness activities.

Figure 6. *Peer norms about consent and dating.*



When analyzed by gender, the findings show that girls are more likely than boys to recognize the presence of double standards in dating behavior. Overall, 64.5% of girls agree or strongly agree that girls in their school are judged more harshly than boys for their dating behavior, compared to 53.3% of boys. Girls are also more likely to strongly agree with this statement, at 27.1% compared to 16.9% among boys.

Perceptions of peer attitudes toward consent are quite similar between girls and boys. Nearly half of both groups agree or strongly agree that most boys their age believe asking for consent "ruins the moment" - 48.8% among girls and 47.6% among boys. This suggests that this perception is shared across gender groups.

Views on peer intervention are also broadly similar, with 60.3% of girls and 62.8% of boys agreeing or strongly agreeing that most of their friends would stop a friend who was clearly pressuring someone into something they did not want. However, girls are more likely than boys to disagree with this statement, which may indicate slightly lower confidence among girls that peers would intervene in such situations. Overall, the gender differences are most visible in relation to the dating double standard, while views on consent-related peer norms and intervention are more closely aligned. This represents an important protective factor that programmes can build upon by encouraging adolescents to act safely and confidently as active bystanders when witnessing harmful behaviour.

Table 7. Peer norms about consent and dating. - By Gender

		Female	Male
Most boys my age believe that asking for consent "ruins the moment."	Strongly agree	15.9%	13.0%
	Agree	32.9%	34.6%
	Neither	20.6%	24.6%
	Disagree	20.7%	17.6%
	Strongly disagree	1.4%	2.4%
	Don't know / Prefer not to say	8.4%	7.9%
In my school, girls are judged more harshly than boys for their dating behavior ("double standard").	Strongly agree	27.1%	16.9%
	Agree	37.4%	36.4%
	Neither	19.0%	24.2%
	Disagree	12.4%	15.3%
	Strongly disagree	0.9%	1.4%
	Don't know / Prefer not to say	3.3%	5.8%
Most of my friends would stop a friend who was clearly pressuring someone into something they didn't want	Strongly agree	18.8%	17.5%
	Agree	41.5%	45.3%
	Neither	17.6%	23.4%
	Disagree	17.2%	5.4%
	Strongly disagree	0.0%	1.1%
	Don't know / Prefer not to say	4.9%	7.3%

Knowledge of rights and laws around consent is high, but exposure to formal education on the topic lags well behind. A large majority of respondents are aware of their legal protections: 80.8% know that sharing an intimate image of someone without their permission is a crime, and 70.4% know the age below which a person cannot legally give consent to sexual activity in Kosovo. Uncertainty on these legal questions is rare - only 4.6% were unsure about the law on intimate images.

Formal schooling on these issues, however, reaches fewer than half of children. Just 44.0% report having received any formal lessons in school about consent, healthy relationships, or sexual rights, while 46.4% say they have not. The contrast between strong legal awareness and limited formal instruction suggests that children are acquiring much of their knowledge informally - through media, peers, or family - rather than through the education system, highlighting a clear opportunity to strengthen school-based education on consent and rights.

Schools therefore represent an important setting not only for increasing knowledge of consent and legal rights, but also for fostering respectful relationships, challenging harmful gender norms and strengthening adolescents' confidence to recognize and respond to inappropriate behaviour. Strengthening school-based education is particularly important given that almost half of respondents reported never having received formal education on these topics despite demonstrating relatively high legal awareness.

Table 8. *Knowledge of rights, laws, and education about consent*

	Yes	No	Not sure
Do you know the age below which a person cannot legally give consent to sexual activity in Kosovo?	70.4%	20.2%	9.4%
Do you know that sharing an intimate image of anyone without their permission is a crime?	80.8%	14.6%	4.6%
Have you received any formal lessons in school about consent, healthy relationships, or sexual rights?	44.0%	46.4%	9.6%

Overall, the findings suggest that adolescents possess a solid foundation of knowledge about consent and its core principles. However, this understanding coexists with persistent misconceptions related to communication, refusal, and gender stereotypes, as well as limited access to formal education on consent and healthy relationships. Together, these findings highlight the importance of strengthening comprehensive, age-appropriate consent education that not only improves knowledge of legal rights but also promotes respectful relationships, challenges harmful gender norms, and equips adolescents with the skills to recognize, communicate and respect consent in both offline and online environments.

ONLINE HARASSMENT AND REPORTING

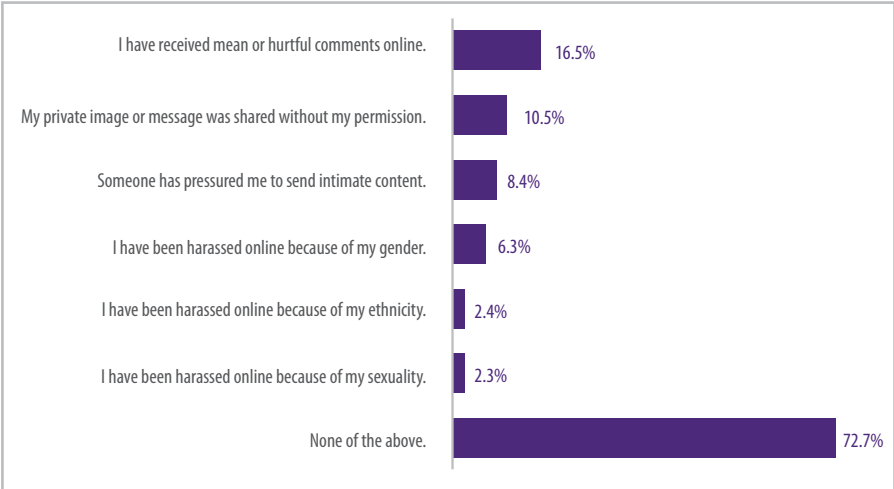
Reported experiences of online harassment provide a clear picture of the digital safety of respondents aged 16-18 in Kosovo. Additionally, levels of trust indicate how comfortable those surveyed feel when they interact with school support staff or institutions regarding personal safety. Moreover, identifying specific barriers to reporting highlights what participants believe would improve safety in and around school.

Most respondents report not having experienced online harassment in the past year, but a meaningful minority have. Nearly three-quarters (72.7%) selected none of the listed experiences, while the remainder reported at least one form of online harm. The most common experience was receiving mean or hurtful comments online, reported by 16.5% of respondents.

More serious forms of image-based and sexual harassment also affect a notable share of children. One in ten respondents (10.5%) reported that a private image or message of theirs had been shared without their permission, and 8.4% said they had been pressured to send intimate content. Harassment linked to sexuality was the least frequently reported, affecting 2.3%. Taken together, these figures indicate that while the majority feel digitally safe, roughly a quarter of children surveyed have encountered some form of online harassment, including the more damaging forms involving private images and coercion.

These forms of digital violence can have significant consequences for adolescents' emotional well-being, peer relationships and sense of safety. The prevalence of image-based abuse and coercion highlights the importance of addressing online safety as an integral component of child protection.

Figure 7. Experience of online harassment - in the last 12 months.



Online harassment appeared in both girls' and boys' discussions as a familiar and serious issue closely tied to school and peer life. Adolescents named insults, comments, misuse of photos, rumors, bullying, pressure to send images, fake accounts, and threats, and recognized emotional consequences ranging from shame and isolation to anxiety, depression, and serious psychological harm.

The qualitative findings demonstrate that online harassment extends beyond isolated digital incidents, affecting adolescents' emotional well-being, peer relationships and participation in everyday school life. This highlights that online violence should not be understood solely as a digital issue, but as one that has tangible consequences for children's social interactions, sense of safety and overall well-being.

Girls described TikTok comments, negative messages, rumors, and photos shared without permission as the most common forms, noting that a child may post a video and then receive harmful comments from others who feel entitled to judge them; they also described pressure to send private images, including blackmail.



"I think that what happens the most now is comments. Especially TikTok, which has become extremely popular now. I think comments on TikTok are very harassing, and I believe they affect every person, because no one would want to be harassed."

- A girl, aged 16-18

Boys described harassment through unwanted follows, negative comments, misuse of photos, and memes made from someone's images, emphasizing the social and emotional damage when peers circulate images or turn them into mockery - and referring to severe consequences, including school avoidance and cases linked to attempted suicide.



“Photos can be taken, for example, from social networks and placed on different pages that maybe create memes, as we call them, and I mean society itself, that person will feel bad, and the circle around them maybe will not receive it well.”

- A boy, aged 16–18

Girls described these risks as strongly gendered, including fake profiles and older men contacting them online, and said they faced greater difficulty reporting for fear of not being believed or being blamed. Both groups agreed that girls face harsher consequences when private images become public, as society quickly labels them and links the incident to family honor.

These findings illustrate that online harassment is experienced differently by girls and boys. While both encounter harmful online behaviour, girls more frequently describe gendered forms of abuse, including unwanted contact, image-based abuse and victim-blaming, reflecting broader gender inequalities that extend into digital spaces.

Barriers to reporting online harassment are widespread and rooted in both social fear and distrust of institutions. The single most common barrier is fear of peer judgement: combining “strongly agree” and “agree,” 47.7% of respondents say they would be afraid that other students would find out and mock them. Institutional distrust is almost as prevalent - 40.6% do not believe their school would keep a report confidential, and 40.0% do not believe the police would take a case of online harassment seriously.

A similar share, 39.7%, feel that reporting would change nothing and is therefore pointless, pointing to a sense of futility that can discourage children from coming forward. Fear of parental punishment is the least influential barrier: only 37.1% agree it would deter them, and it is the statement respondents most often reject,



with 41.9% disagreeing. Overall, the picture is one in which social embarrassment and low confidence in institutional responses - rather than fear of family - are the main obstacles to reporting.

Taken together, these findings suggest that barriers to reporting are shaped less by a lack of awareness than by adolescents' expectations that reporting may expose them to stigma, compromise their confidentiality, or fail to result in meaningful action. Strengthening confidence in school support services therefore requires not only clear procedures, but also ensuring that children understand how confidentiality is protected and what they can expect when they report a concern.

Table 9. *Reporting barriers and trust.*

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know / Prefer not to say
I would be afraid that my parents would punish me if I reported online harassment.	10.6%	26.5%	16.7%	31.5%	10.4%	4.2%
I would be afraid that other students would find out and mock me.	16.8%	30.9%	21.5%	20.8%	4.8%	5.2%
I don't believe the police would take a case of online harassment seriously.	12.7%	27.3%	28.0%	23.2%	5.4%	3.3%
I don't believe the school would keep my report confidential.	9.5%	31.1%	28.2%	20.6%	4.6%	5.9%
I believe it would change nothing - so there is no point in reporting.	8.4%	31.3%	25.9%	21.9%	6.1%	6.3%

Disaggregated by gender, distrust of institutions is somewhat more pronounced among boys. Combining "strongly agree" and "agree," 44.0% of boys doubt their school would keep a report confidential, against 37.0% of girls, and boys are also more likely to fear parental punishment (40.5% versus 33.5%) and to view reporting as futile (40.9% versus 38.3%).

Girls, by contrast, are marginally more concerned about peer mockery (48.4% versus 47.1%) and about whether the police would take a case seriously (41.1% versus 39.1%), though these gaps are small. The clearest gender difference concerns family: girls are notably more likely than boys to reject the fear of parental punishment as a barrier (44.0% disagree versus 39.9%), suggesting they feel somewhat more confident that reporting would not provoke a punitive reaction at home.

Although the gender differences are generally modest, they suggest that girls and boys anticipate different social consequences when considering whether to report online harassment. Girls appear somewhat more concerned about stigma and institutional responses, while boys more frequently question the effectiveness of reporting and express greater concern about parental reactions.

Table 10. Reporting barriers and trust. - By Gender

		Strongly agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know / Prefer not to say
I would be afraid that my parents would punish me if I reported online harassment.	Female	8.2%	25.3%	17.7%	34.2%	9.8%	4.8%
	Male	12.9%	27.6%	15.8%	29.0%	10.9%	3.8%
I would be afraid that other students would find out and mock me.	Female	15.9%	32.5%	20.3%	20.6%	3.9%	6.7%
	Male	17.7%	29.4%	22.6%	21.0%	5.5%	3.8%
I don't believe the police would take a case of online harassment seriously.	Female	13.2%	27.9%	28.3%	22.7%	4.2%	3.7%
	Male	12.3%	26.8%	27.7%	23.7%	6.6%	2.9%
I don't believe the school would keep my report confidential.	Female	8.6%	28.4%	28.8%	22.7%	5.3%	6.1%
	Male	10.4%	33.6%	27.6%	18.7%	3.9%	5.8%
I believe it would change nothing - so there is no point in reporting.	Female	6.8%	31.5%	27.7%	21.1%	6.1%	6.7%
	Male	9.9%	31.0%	24.3%	22.7%	6.1%	5.9%

When asked whom they would turn to if something bad happened, respondents place far greater trust in family - and mothers above all - than in school-based adults. Mothers are by some distance the most trusted confidant: 59.8% would feel very comfortable telling their mother and a further 27.7% somewhat comfortable, leaving only 3.3% not at all comfortable. Fathers follow, with 45.6% very comfortable, and a close friend of the same age comes next at 34.7%.

School staff are viewed as markedly less approachable. Only 16.9% would feel very comfortable confiding in a psychologist, pedagogue, or other school support worker, and just 8.9% in their class teacher - indeed, 38.8% feel not really comfortable and 20.8% not at all comfortable talking to a class teacher. This hierarchy, running from mother to father to friend and only then to professional support staff, indicates that children overwhelmingly rely on close family and peers rather than institutional channels when something goes wrong.

These findings reinforce the central role of families as adolescents' primary source of support. At the same time, they point to an important opportunity for schools to strengthen students' confidence in professional support services by increasing their visibility, accessibility and perceived confidentiality.

Table 11. *If something bad happened to you, how comfortable would you feel telling each of the following?*

	Very comfortable	Somewhat	Not really	Not at all	Don't have / Don't know this person
Your mother	59.8%	27.7%	7.4%	3.3%	1.7%
Your father	45.6%	26.8%	19.6%	4.8%	3.2%
A close friend your age	34.7%	33.5%	23.5%	6.0%	2.2%
Your class teacher	8.9%	28.1%	38.8%	20.8%	3.4%
Psychologist, pedagogue, or other school support staff	16.9%	32.1%	31.4%	14.8%	4.8%

Gender shapes which family member children turn to. Girls are more comfortable confiding in their mother (63.9% very comfortable versus 56.1% of boys), whereas boys are more comfortable confiding in their father (49.7% very comfortable versus 41.2% of girls). The gap with fathers runs the other way too:

24.7% of girls feel not really comfortable telling their father, compared with only 14.8% of boys.

Patterns with school staff are more uneven. Girls are markedly uncomfortable with their class teacher, with 42.7% feeling not really comfortable, while boys are more likely to be entirely closed off from professional support - 18.4% feel not at all comfortable speaking to a psychologist or other support staff, against 11.0% of girls. Comfort with a close friend is broadly similar across genders (36.5% of boys and 32.8% of girls very comfortable). The overall message is that family remains the primary source of support for both, but along gendered lines, and that neither group readily turns to school professionals.

The findings also suggest that gender shapes adolescents' help-seeking preferences within the family, with girls relying more on mothers and boys on fathers. Understanding these gendered patterns may help schools and support services engage families more effectively when responding to children's protection needs.

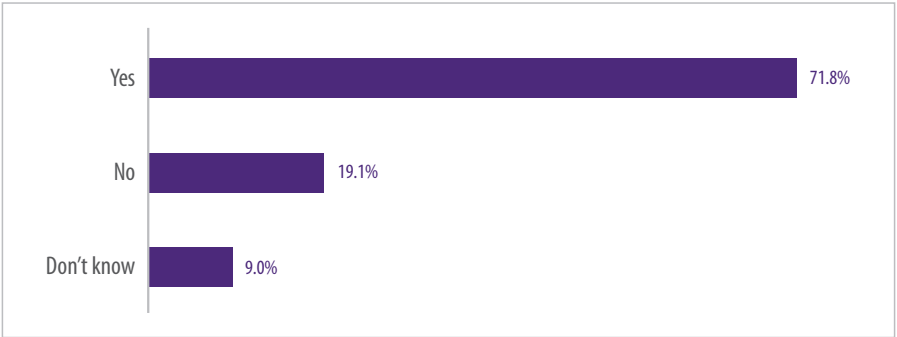
Table 12. *If something bad happened to you, how comfortable would you feel telling each of the following? - By Gender*

		Very comfortable	Some-what	Not really	Not at all	Don't have / Don't know this person
Your mother	Female	63.9%	26.2%	7.8%	0.9%	1.1%
	Male	56.1%	29.1%	7.0%	5.6%	2.3%
Your father	Female	41.2%	26.3%	24.7%	5.5%	2.3%
	Male	49.7%	27.2%	14.8%	4.0%	4.2%
A close friend your age	Female	32.8%	36.4%	24.3%	4.9%	1.6%
	Male	36.5%	30.9%	22.8%	7.1%	2.7%
Your class teacher	Female	7.1%	30.4%	42.7%	17.2%	2.6%
	Male	10.6%	25.9%	35.1%	24.2%	4.2%
Psychologist, pedagogue, or other school support staff	Female	17.6%	35.7%	31.2%	11.0%	4.5%
	Male	16.2%	28.7%	31.6%	18.4%	5.0%

Most respondents are aware that their school provides dedicated support staff. When asked whether their school has a psychologist, pedagogue, or another designated support person, 71.8% answered yes, confirming that such roles exist across most schools represented in the survey.

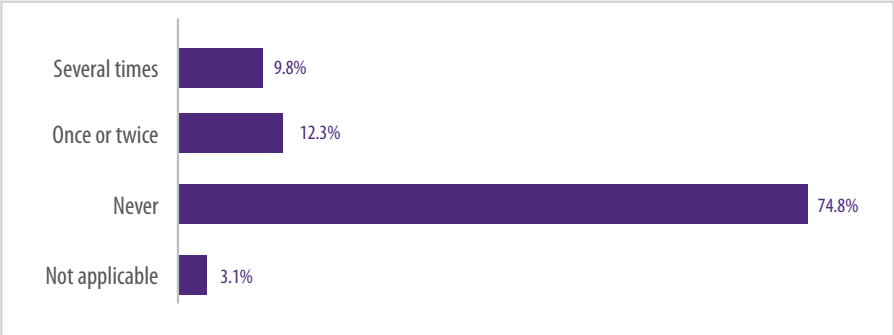
At the same time, a meaningful share were uncertain or unaware: 19.1% answered no and a further 9.0% did not know whether such staff are present. Although a clear majority can confirm these resources exist, the combined 28.1% who say there are none or are unsure points to gaps in either provision or, more likely, in how visibly these support roles are communicated to students.

Figure 8. *Is there a school support staff, such as a psychologist, pedagogue, or another designated support person?*



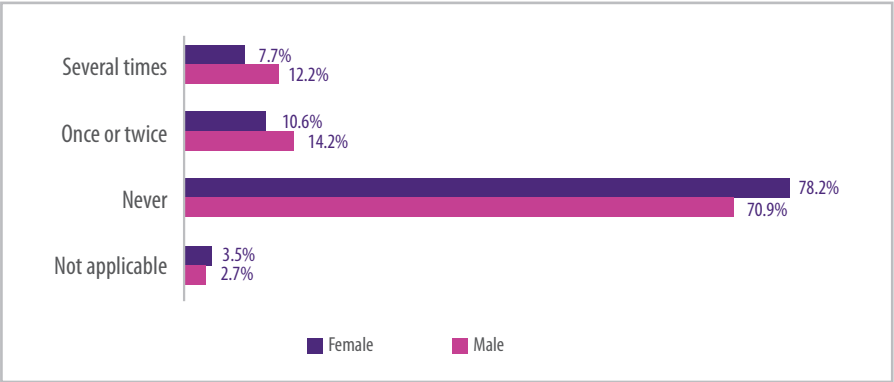
Even where support staff exist, actual contact with them is rare. Three-quarters of respondents (74.8%) report that they have never spoken with such a person one-to-one in the past year. Only 12.3% had spoken with them once or twice, and 9.8% several times, with a further 3.1% considering the question not applicable. The contrast between the 71.8% who confirm support staff are present and the 74.8% who have never spoken with them one-to-one is striking. It suggests that the existence of school support professionals does not translate into engagement: for the large majority of students these roles remain a formal provision rather than an accessible, used resource.

Figure 9. *In the last 12 months, have you spoken with them one-to-one?*



This limited contact is slightly more pronounced among girls. While 78.2% of female respondents say they have never spoken one-to-one with school support staff in the past year, the figure is lower among boys at 70.9%. Other frequencies of contact - speaking once or twice, or several times - show little meaningful variation between the two groups. The gap therefore lies mainly in the share who have had no contact at all, with girls somewhat more likely than boys to have never engaged with these professionals.

Figure 10. *In the last 12 months, have you spoken with them one-to-one? - By Gender*



School psychologists appeared as a possible source of support, but girls and boys described different experiences. Girls saw the psychologist as a safer source of support after family, while boys described more barriers related to access, parental permission, doubts about effectiveness, and stigma. Girls gave positive examples of psychologists who were approachable, active

in classrooms, and willing to speak openly with students, while noting that the quality of support varies from school to school.



“Yes, in my school, there is a psychologist who is very good and very close to the students. Often, for example, if a teacher is absent, she comes to the class, holds a session with us, explains things to us, or talks to us, and she does not hesitate at all.”

- A girl, aged 16–18

Boys confirmed that schools have psychologists but described stronger barriers: the need for parental permission to meet one, doubts about how much they can help, and the stigma of being seen entering the office, including a tendency in Kosovar society to confuse seeing a psychologist with seeing a psychiatrist.



“I mean, if the student expresses a desire to meet with a psychologist, again, they have to get permission from the parent, and the parent also has to agree for their child to have a session with the school psychologist.”

- A boy, aged 16–18

Together, these perspectives suggest that the effectiveness of school psychologists depends not only on their presence within schools but also on adolescents' confidence that these services are approachable, confidential and free from stigma.

More broadly, adolescents did not describe formal systems as the first place they would turn when facing a serious problem, placing greater trust in family, siblings, cousins, and friends. Schools and institutions, they suggested, need to become more visible, youth-friendly, and easier to approach before children face serious situations.

Attitudes toward school reporting and support mechanisms are moderately positive overall. The strongest area of confidence is knowing where to turn: combining “strongly agree” and “agree,” 64.0% of respondents say they know



where or to whom they can report a concern if a student feels unsafe, mistreated, bullied, or needs protection. A majority also feel comfortable approaching staff, with 56.0% agreeing they would feel comfortable talking to school support staff about a personal problem, and 55.0% agreeing that their school's support and reporting mechanisms are effective.

Confidence is somewhat lower on confidentiality and on whether help is widely understood. Half of respondents (50.1%) trust school support staff to keep students' concerns confidential except where safety is at risk, and 52.9% believe most students know how to ask for help. While these majorities are encouraging, the fact that only around half trust staff to maintain confidentiality echoes the reporting barriers seen earlier and marks confidentiality as the weakest link in students' confidence in school support systems.

Given that confidentiality also emerged as a key concern during the focus group discussions, these findings reinforce the importance of ensuring that reporting mechanisms are not only available, but also trusted by students. Strengthening confidence in school support services therefore requires not only clear procedures, but also consistent communication about confidentiality, respectful handling of disclosures, and visible follow-up when concerns are reported.

Table 13. Please indicate your level of agreement:

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know / Prefer not to say
I would feel comfortable talking to school support staff about a personal problem.	22.0%	34.0%	22.9%	13.9%	4.5%	2.6%
I trust school support staff to keep students' concerns confidential, except when someone's safety is at risk.	13.1%	37.0%	28.0%	15.9%	3.1%	3.0%

I know where or to whom I can report a concern if a student feels unsafe, mistreated, bullied, or needs protection.	18.5%	45.5%	23.8%	7.3%	3.0%	1.9%
Most students in my school know where and how to ask for help if they need support or protection.	13.4%	39.5%	25.9%	11.5%	1.8%	8.0%
The support and reporting mechanisms at my school are effective in helping students who need protection or support.	12.7%	42.3%	27.4%	7.8%	2.8%	7.0%

By gender, girls report greater comfort engaging with support staff, while boys express more procedural certainty. Combining “strongly agree” and “agree,” 60.1% of girls would feel comfortable talking to school support staff about a personal problem, against 52.1% of boys. Boys, however, are more certain about where to turn: 67.2% know where or to whom to report a concern (with 22.3% strongly agreeing), compared with 60.5% of girls (only 14.4% strongly agreeing).

On the remaining statements the genders are close. Trust in confidentiality is similar (51.1% of boys and 48.9% of girls), as is the belief that most students know how to ask for help (around 52–54% of both). Boys are more likely to strongly agree that mechanisms are effective (16.1% versus 9.0% of girls), though overall agreement is comparable (53.9% of boys, 56.1% of girls). The pattern suggests boys feel more confident that systems exist and work, while girls feel more able to actually use them.

Table 14. Please indicate your level of agreement: - By Gender

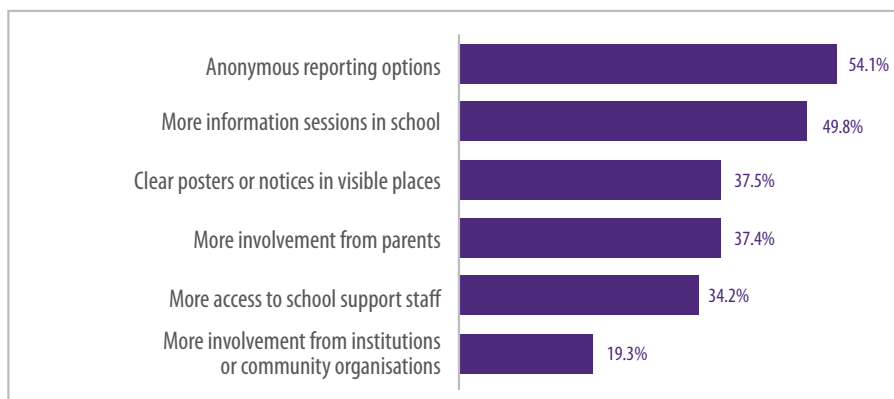
		Strongly agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know / Prefer not to say
I would feel comfortable talking to school support staff about a personal problem.	Female	23.8%	36.3%	19.1%	14.3%	3.8%	2.7%
	Male	20.2%	31.9%	26.5%	13.6%	5.2%	2.5%
I trust school support staff to keep students' concerns confidential, except when someone's safety is at risk.	Female	13.4%	35.5%	29.4%	15.5%	2.8%	3.4%
	Male	12.7%	38.4%	26.7%	16.2%	3.3%	2.6%
I know where or to whom I can report a concern if a student feels unsafe, mistreated, bullied, or needs protection.	Female	14.4%	46.1%	26.7%	7.6%	3.2%	2.0%
	Male	22.3%	44.9%	21.1%	7.0%	2.8%	1.9%
Most students in my school know where and how to ask for help if they need support or protection.	Female	11.1%	42.5%	24.9%	13.7%	0.8%	7.0%
	Male	15.5%	36.6%	26.7%	9.3%	2.8%	9.0%
The support and reporting mechanisms at my school are effective in helping students who need protection or support.	Female	9.0%	47.1%	26.8%	7.2%	2.0%	7.9%
	Male	16.1%	37.8%	28.1%	8.3%	3.6%	6.2%

When asked what would best help students understand where to seek help or report concerns, respondents most favoured measures that protect their privacy and improve information. Anonymous reporting options were the most popular, chosen by 54.1%, closely followed by more information sessions in school (49.8%). This preference for anonymity is consistent with the earlier finding that fear of peer judgement is the leading barrier to reporting.

The strong preference for anonymous reporting options suggests that adolescents value reporting mechanisms that minimise social exposure and reduce concerns about stigma. These findings may inform the design of more child-friendly and accessible reporting systems within schools.

Other measures attracted more moderate support: clear posters or notices in visible places (37.5%), more involvement from parents (37.4%), and more access to school support staff (34.2%). More involvement from institutions or community organisations was the least selected option, at 19.3%. The overall pattern suggests students prioritise discreet, low-exposure routes to help and better information over greater institutional or external involvement.

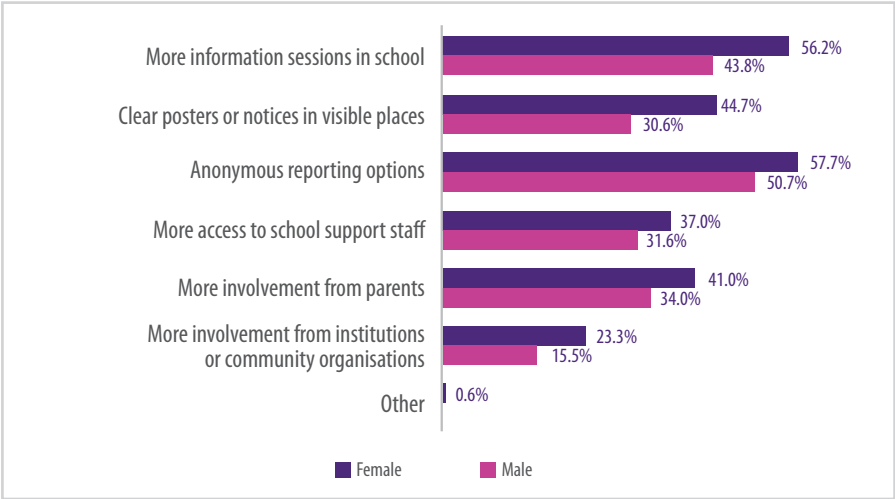
Figure 11. *What would help students better understand where to seek help or report concerns?*



Girls consistently favour every proposed measure more strongly than boys, with the widest gap on visible information. Clear posters or notices were supported by 44.7% of girls but only 30.6% of boys, and more information sessions in school by 56.2% of girls versus 43.8% of boys.

The same direction holds across the remaining options: anonymous reporting (57.7% of girls versus 50.7% of boys), more parental involvement (41.0% versus 34.0%), more access to support staff (37.0% versus 31.6%), and more involvement from institutions or community organisations (23.3% versus 15.5%). Girls’ stronger endorsement of every measure suggests they perceive a greater need for, or place greater value on, improved reporting and support infrastructure than boys do.

Figure 12. *What would help students better understand where to seek help or report concerns? - By Gender*



Trust in how institutions would respond to a child-protection report is generally positive, and highest for the police and the family or community. Three-quarters of respondents believe it is very or somewhat likely that the Kosovo Police would take a report seriously and protect the child (38.0% very likely, 37.0% somewhat), and a similar 76.2% expect the family’s and community’s reaction to protect rather than shame the child (35.3% very likely, 40.9% somewhat).

Confidence in schools is more measured. While 64.6% think the school would likely protect the child and not blame them (23.7% very likely, 40.9% somewhat), schools attract the highest share of neutral responses, with 20.7% answering “neither.” Outright negative expectations are rare across all three actors - only 2.3% think it very unlikely the family and community would protect the child - but the relatively lower and more hesitant trust in schools mirrors the weaker confidence in school confidentiality seen earlier.

Strengthening institutional trust therefore requires more than simply establishing reporting procedures. It also depends on students believing that reports will be handled fairly, confidentially and in a manner that prioritises their safety and well-being.

Table 15. *Trust in the response of institutions.*

	Very likely	Somewhat	Neither	Somewhat unlikely	Very unlikely	Don't know
The Kosovo Police would take the report seriously and protect the child.	38.0%	37.0%	9.8%	8.6%	3.5%	3.1%
The school would protect the child and not blame them.	23.7%	40.9%	20.7%	8.6%	2.9%	3.2%
The family's and community's reaction would protect the child, not shame them.	35.3%	40.9%	11.0%	6.8%	2.3%	3.7%

Boys express somewhat greater confidence in institutional responses, particularly the police. Some 41.6% of boys think it very likely the Kosovo Police would take a report seriously and protect the child, against 34.3% of girls, who more often opt for the moderate “somewhat likely” (40.6% versus 33.5% of boys).

On schools, boys are more neutral than positive: 24.9% answered “neither” regarding whether the school would protect and not blame the child, compared with 16.3% of girls. Girls, meanwhile, show more concern about social stigma - 9.8% think it somewhat unlikely the family and community would protect rather than shame the child, against 4.0% of boys. In short, boys lean toward firmer trust in formal institutions, while girls are more cautious about both schools’ neutrality and the risk of family or community shaming.

Table 16. *Trust in the response of institutions. - By Gender*

		Female	Male
The Kosovo Police would take the report seriously and protect the child.	Very likely	34.3%	41.6%
	Somewhat	40.6%	33.5%
	Neither	9.2%	10.3%
	Somewhat unlikely	9.9%	7.4%
	Very unlikely	2.4%	4.6%
	Don't know	3.6%	2.6%
The school would protect the child and not blame them.	Very likely	25.3%	22.3%
	Somewhat	43.7%	38.2%
	Neither	16.3%	24.9%
	Somewhat unlikely	9.9%	7.4%
	Very unlikely	2.2%	3.5%
	Don't know	2.6%	3.8%
The family's and community's reaction would protect the child, not shame them.	Very likely	33.0%	37.4%
	Somewhat	40.3%	41.5%
	Neither	10.3%	11.7%
	Somewhat unlikely	9.8%	4.0%
	Very unlikely	1.6%	2.9%
	Don't know	5.0%	2.5%

Perceptions of safety are strongest inside the school building and weaken as students move outward and online. Combining “strongly agree” and “agree,” 83.5% feel safe inside the school building during the day (with 49.2% strongly agreeing). Safety in the schoolyard and outside the gate at the end of the day is lower at 71.3%, and feeling safe in online communication with classmates outside school hours is similar at 70.8%.

The least certain area is the safety of minority students: 65.3% agree that students from Roma, Ashkali, Egyptian or other communities feel as safe as others, but this item also draws the highest share of “don’t know / prefer not to say” responses, at 14.4% - suggesting many respondents are unsure about, or reluctant to comment on, the experiences of minority peers. Overall, safety is felt most strongly within the controlled environment of the school building and more weakly in less supervised physical and digital spaces.

The lower levels of perceived safety in online interactions are consistent with the earlier findings on online harassment and reinforce the need to address digital environments as an integral part of child protection and school safety efforts.

Table 17. *Safety in and around school.*

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know / Prefer not to say
I feel safe inside my school building during the school day.	49.2%	34.3%	11.3%	3.5%	0.8%	1.0%
I feel safe in the schoolyard and outside the gate at the end of the day.	35.4%	35.9%	17.6%	7.2%	2.6%	1.4%
Students from Roma, Ashkali, Egyptian or other minority communities feel as safe at my school as other students.	33.1%	32.2%	14.2%	4.7%	1.3%	14.4%
I feel safe in online communication with my classmates outside school hours (group chats, social media.)	33.5%	37.3%	17.9%	7.3%	1.6%	2.4%

The clearest gender difference in perceived safety concerns online interactions. Boys feel notably safer communicating with classmates online outside school hours, with 41.5% agreeing they feel safe against 32.9% of girls - and girls are also more likely to actively disagree (9.6% versus 5.1% of boys). For physical safety, however, the genders are closely aligned: feeling safe inside the school building, in the schoolyard, and perceptions of minority students' safety show no meaningful difference between boys and girls. The gendered gap is therefore specific to the digital environment, where girls feel measurably less safe than boys.

Table 18. Safety in and around school. - By Gender

		Female	Male
I feel safe inside my school building during the school day.	Strongly agree	48.7%	49.6%
	Agree	34.8%	33.8%
	Neither	10.1%	12.4%
	Disagree	4.9%	2.1%
	Strongly disagree	0.8%	0.7%
	Don't know / Prefer not to say	0.7%	1.3%
I feel safe in the schoolyard and outside the gate at the end of the day.	Strongly agree	35.5%	35.2%
	Agree	36.8%	35.1%
	Neither	17.2%	17.9%
	Disagree	6.4%	7.9%
	Strongly disagree	2.6%	2.6%
	Don't know / Prefer not to say	1.4%	1.3%
Students from Roma, Ashkali, Egyptian or other minority communities feel as safe at my school as other students.	Strongly agree	34.5%	31.8%
	Agree	31.8%	32.6%
	Neither	12.7%	15.7%
	Disagree	4.8%	4.6%
	Strongly disagree	1.6%	1.0%
	Don't know / Prefer not to say	14.6%	14.3%
I feel safe in online communication with my classmates outside school hours (group chats, social media)	Strongly agree	32.8%	34.3%
	Agree	32.9%	41.5%
	Neither	19.7%	16.1%
	Disagree	9.6%	5.1%
	Strongly disagree	1.4%	1.9%
	Don't know / Prefer not to say	3.6%	1.2%

Overall, the findings demonstrate that adolescents' willingness to seek help is shaped not only by the availability of reporting mechanisms but also by the extent to which they trust that their concerns will be taken seriously, treated confidentially and acted upon effectively. While families remain the primary source of support, schools and other institutions have an important opportunity to strengthen adolescents' confidence by providing accessible, confidential and

child-friendly reporting systems. The findings also highlight that girls and boys experience online harassment differently, underscoring the need for responses that are both child-centred and gender-responsive.



FAMILY LIFE AND COMMUNICATION

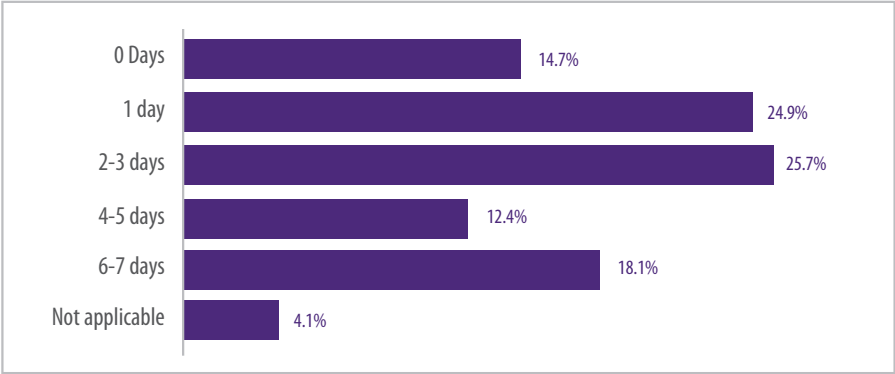
Frequent interactions within the household reveal how often respondents aged 16-18 in Kosovo engage in meaningful dialogue with a parent or main caregiver. Analysis of the time spent in these exchanges additionally indicates the depth of connection between family members during a typical week. Notably, the levels of agreement regarding specific household statements highlight how those surveyed perceive their personal relationships.

Meaningful daily conversation between children and their parents or caregivers is, for many, relatively infrequent. The most common pattern is conversation on 2–3 days of a typical week (25.7%), closely followed by just 1 day per week (24.9%) - meaning that just over half of respondents (50.6%) have a real conversation about their day on no more than three days a week.

Only around three in ten talk with a caregiver on most days: 18.1% on 6–7 days and 12.4% on 4–5 days. Of particular concern, 14.7% report having no days at all in a typical week on which they have a real conversation - more than a few words - with a parent or caregiver about their day, with a further 4.1% considering the question not applicable. This points to a substantial minority of adolescents who have little regular dialogue with the adults responsible for them.

Regular communication between adolescents and their caregivers is an important protective factor, providing opportunities to discuss sensitive issues, build trust and identify concerns at an early stage. Limited opportunities for meaningful conversation may reduce children's willingness to disclose experiences of harassment, violence or other challenges when they arise.

Figure 13. *On how many DAYS in a typical week do you have a real conversation (more than a few words) with a parent or main caregiver about your day?*

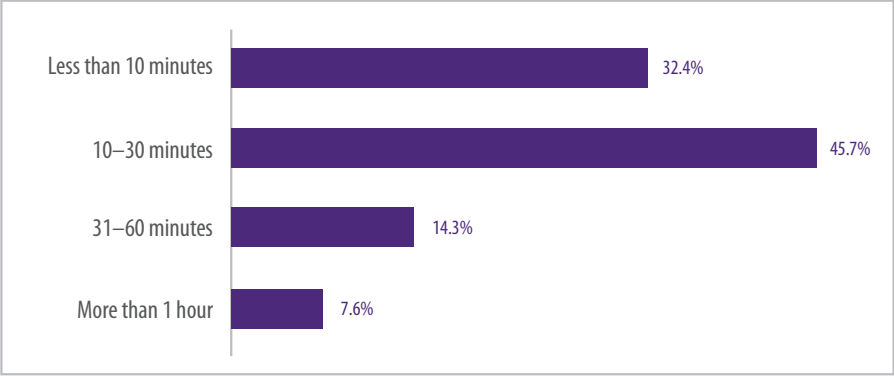


When these conversations do happen, they tend to be brief. The most common duration is 10–30 minutes, reported by 45.7% of respondents, while a further 32.4% spend less than 10 minutes talking. Taken together, more than three-quarters of respondents (78.1%) spend under half an hour in conversation on the days they talk with a parent or caregiver.

Longer, more sustained exchanges are uncommon: only 14.3% spend 31–60 minutes and just 7.6% more than an hour. Combined with the earlier finding that conversations occur on relatively few days each week, this indicates that family dialogue for many respondents is not only infrequent but also short - limiting the opportunity for the kind of in-depth communication through which sensitive issues are most likely to surface.

These findings suggest that the quality of family communication should not be understood only in terms of frequency, but also in terms of whether adolescents feel they have sufficient time and space to discuss sensitive topics openly with trusted adults.

Figure 14. *On those days, approximately how much time do you usually spend talking?*



Despite the brevity of everyday conversation, respondents report high levels of trust and support within the family. Mothers are the most confided-in: combining “strongly agree” and “agree,” 81.9% feel they can talk to their mother or main female caregiver about things that really bother them, and the strength of this bond is notable - 47.9% strongly agree, while only 2.6% disagree. Communication with fathers is also strong though slightly lower, with 75.1% agreeing they can confide in their father or main male caregiver.

Parental guidance on respectful conduct is widespread, with 77.3% agreeing that their parents talk with them about how to behave respectfully with people of the other sex. Confidence in supportive parenting is also high but more tempered: 73.4% agree that if they got into serious trouble their parents would help them first before blaming them, though this statement attracts the largest share of neutral responses (19.1% answering “neither”), suggesting some uncertainty among the surveyed about how their parents would actually react in a crisis.

The findings nevertheless indicate that families remain adolescents’ primary source of emotional support and guidance. This reinforces the important role parents and caregivers play in creating safe environments where adolescents feel able to seek help before problems escalate.

Table 19. For each statement below, please indicate how much you agree or disagree:

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know / Prefer not to say
I can talk to my mother (or main female caregiver) about things that really bother me.	47.9%	34.0%	13.9%	2.4%	0.2%	1.5%
I can talk to my father (or main male caregiver) about things that really bother me.	33.3%	41.8%	16.3%	4.8%	2.3%	1.4%
My parents talk with me about how to behave with people of the other sex, in a respectful way	38.6%	38.7%	14.6%	5.4%	0.7%	1.9%
If I got into serious trouble, my parents would help me first, before blaming me.	37.2%	36.2%	19.1%	2.6%	2.5%	2.5%

Patterns of family communication differ by gender in revealing ways. Girls express the strongest emotional openness with their mother: 52.6% strongly agree they can confide in her, against 43.6% of boys - although once the “agree” responses are added, boys reach a marginally higher combined total (84.2% versus 79.5%), as they more often choose the moderate “agree” option. With fathers the direction reverses: boys are more comfortable, with 77.6% agreeing they can confide in their father compared with 72.5% of girls, and a higher share strongly agreeing (36.1% versus 30.3%).

Boys also report receiving more parental guidance on respectful behaviour (81.7% agree versus 72.7% of girls, with girls more than twice as likely to disagree - 7.8% versus 3.2%). On whether parents would help before blaming, agreement is similar overall (74.5% of boys, 72.2% of girls), but girls are more hesitant, with 21.5% answering “neither” against 16.8% of boys. Overall, girls show the deepest emotional bond with their mothers, while boys report somewhat more open communication with fathers and more explicit parental guidance - mirroring the gendered family roles seen elsewhere in the survey.

These patterns suggest that gender norms influence not only adolescents' expectations of themselves, but also the relationships they develop with parents and caregivers. Recognising these differences may help strengthen family-based interventions that encourage open communication with both girls and boys.

Table 20. *For each statement below, please indicate how much you agree or disagree:*
- By Gender

		Female	Male
I can talk to my mother (or main female caregiver) about things that really bother me.	Strongly agree	52.6%	43.6%
	Agree	26.9%	40.6%
	Neither	16.2%	11.9%
	Disagree	2.2%	2.6%
	Strongly disagree	0.4%	0.0%
	Don't know / Prefer not to say	1.6%	1.3%
I can talk to my father (or main male caregiver) about things that really bother me.	Strongly agree	30.3%	36.1%
	Agree	42.2%	41.5%
	Neither	17.6%	15.1%
	Disagree	5.3%	4.3%
	Strongly disagree	3.0%	1.7%
	Don't know / Prefer not to say	1.5%	1.4%
My parents talk with me about how to behave with people of the other sex, in a respectful way	Strongly agree	38.0%	39.2%
	Agree	34.7%	42.5%
	Neither	16.5%	12.9%
	Disagree	7.8%	3.2%
	Strongly disagree	0.0%	1.4%
	Don't know / Prefer not to say	3.1%	0.8%
If I got into serious trouble, my parents would help me first, before blaming me.	Strongly agree	39.2%	35.4%
	Agree	33.0%	39.1%
	Neither	21.5%	16.8%
	Disagree	2.8%	2.4%
	Strongly disagree	1.9%	3.0%
	Don't know / Prefer not to say	1.6%	3.2%

Family appeared as the main source of support when adolescents described serious problems, though girls and boys also emphasized trusted siblings, cousins, and close friends. Both said they would turn first to family or a trusted person before going to formal institutions, but they described different barriers to seeking help.

Girls emphasized trust, saying they speak to parents, an older sibling, a cousin, or a close friend when they trust them, while avoiding friends close to the person involved or whom they do not fully trust; they also said they may keep smaller problems to themselves to avoid worrying their family.



“I also think that everyone goes to talk to someone they trust the most. Mainly these are parents or an older brother or sister.”
- A girl, aged 16–18

Girls’ accounts suggest that trust, rather than family role alone, determines whom they choose to confide in. The emphasis placed on trusted relationships also illustrates the importance adolescents attach to feeling listened to without fear of judgement or blame.

Boys described family as the first source of support in serious situations, preferring to notify family rather than act alone, but recognized that girls may hesitate to tell fathers for fear of strict reactions or blame - while boys themselves may try to solve problems alone because they feel they should manage independently.



“I think that the first thing I would do if I were in a serious problem with someone my age or older, I would notify my family so that I would not take measures myself or with my friends.”
- A boy, aged 16–18

Boys’ reflections also highlight how traditional expectations surrounding masculinity may discourage help-seeking by encouraging boys to manage difficulties independently. These findings reinforce the importance of creating



supportive environments in which boys also feel comfortable seeking assistance when needed.

Overall, the findings demonstrate that families remain adolescents' primary source of trust, guidance and emotional support. At the same time, the quality of communication varies considerably, with many children reporting relatively infrequent or brief conversations with caregivers despite expressing high levels of trust in them. The qualitative findings further suggest that adolescents are most likely to seek help from trusted family members when they expect understanding rather than judgement, highlighting the importance of open, supportive and non-judgemental family relationships in strengthening children's protection and well-being.

Taken together with the findings on help-seeking, these results further emphasise the important role parents and caregivers play in recognising concerns, responding supportively, and helping children access protection when they experience violence, harassment or other risks.

Conclusion

The study confirms that adolescents aged 16 to 18 in Kosovo come of age within a social order still strongly shaped by traditional gender roles, even as those roles are increasingly questioned. Many adolescents continue to perceive men as the rightful earners and decision-makers and women as the primary carers of home and family - expectations mirrored in respondents' own households, where fathers are typically the main earners and mothers full-time homemakers. Boys are judged above all against a breadwinner and leadership model, while girls are expected to combine domestic competence and chastity with rising educational and professional ambition, a double burden the focus groups described in vivid, personal terms. Rather than replacing traditional expectations, these emerging aspirations appear to have been added to them, requiring girls to navigate multiple and sometimes competing social expectations. Double standards around dating and reputation persist, and boys hold consistently more traditional attitudes than girls.

Yet alongside these patterns the study finds real movement and real awareness. Most adolescents support equal access to education, a majority back the equal sharing of housework, and respondents recognize both that gender inequality is a serious problem and that rigid masculinity harms boys and men too. Understanding of consent is, for many, mature and relational - framed in terms of respect and freedom from pressure rather than romantic interest alone - though a permissive minority, concentrated among boys, still equates silence with agreement. The clearest threats now lie less in a limited knowledge alone than in the environments young people inhabit: online spaces where harm is rapid, public, and gendered, and where the fear of being blamed silences those most affected.

Across consent, online harm, and everyday difficulty, the same throughline emerges: young people act on trust, not on the formal availability of help. They turn first to family and trusted peers - and girls above all to their mothers - while school psychologists and reporting mechanisms remain known but underused, held back by doubts about confidentiality, the need for parental permission, stigma, and uncertainty about where to go. The qualitative findings sharpen the central lesson: girls and boys recognize the same inequalities, but they do not carry

them equally, and responses that treat shared awareness as shared experience risk addressing recognition rather than the unequal burden itself. This reinforces the importance of designing interventions that recognise both the shared and gender-specific experiences of adolescents, ensuring that responses are tailored to the different ways girls and boys experience risk, support and help-seeking.

Taken together, the findings provide a robust evidence base for strengthening efforts to promote gender equality, respectful relationships and child protection among adolescents in Kosovo. They argue for a shift in emphasis - from raising awareness toward building trust and confidential, responsive support, and from addressing girls in isolation toward engaging girls and boys together in changing the norms that shape them both. The recommendations that follow translate this evidence into practical priorities for programming, advocacy, and institutional and policy action, with particular attention to the girls and marginalized children, the study set out to reach.



Recommendations

The following recommendations translate the study's findings into practical actions for the institutions and stakeholders responsible for promoting children's rights, gender equality and protection from violence. They are grounded in the evidence generated through this study and recognise that strengthening adolescents' well-being requires coordinated action across education, child protection, justice, families and civil society. Throughout, they reflect the study's central lesson that lasting change depends on building trust, engaging girls and boys together, and reaching marginalized groups.

Ministry of Education and Science

- Given that important misconceptions regarding affirmative consent and persistent gender stereotypes remain despite existing awareness-raising efforts, integrate comprehensive, age-appropriate education on gender equality, affirmative consent, healthy relationships and digital safety into the national curriculum, ensuring that these topics are progressively addressed across all educational levels rather than through one-off awareness activities.
- Recognising that adolescents continue to rely on schools as an important source of information while reporting inconsistent opportunities to discuss these issues and limited confidence in seeking institutional support, strengthen the capacities of teachers, school psychologists, pedagogues and school leadership to facilitate safe, inclusive and child-centred discussions on gender norms, consent, healthy relationships and online safety, and to identify and appropriately respond to disclosures of violence or abuse.
- To address adolescents' concerns regarding confidentiality and fear of judgement when seeking support, develop and institutionalise practical guidance to strengthen schools' capacity to promote safe and inclusive learning environments, prevent and respond to gender-based violence, and ensure child-friendly, confidential and trauma-informed responses to disclosures, in line with existing child protection legislation and referral mechanisms.
- Reflecting the study's finding that boys are more likely to endorse traditional gender norms while girls continue to experience greater restrictions on autonomy and decision-making, ensure that curriculum development, teacher training and school-based programmes explicitly address harmful gender

norms affecting both girls and boys, including restrictive expectations around masculinity, emotional expression and gender roles.

- Given the finding that many adolescents doubt that schools would keep a report confidential and are unsure what happens once a report is made, ensure that schools establish accessible, confidential and child-friendly reporting mechanisms, with clear information for students on where to seek support, how confidentiality is protected and how concerns are addressed.

Schools and Municipal Directorates of Education

- Given the study findings showing that many adolescents have limited understanding of consent and continue to hold misconceptions influenced by harmful gender norms, integrate age-appropriate education on consent, healthy relationships, gender equality and respectful communication into school-based learning and extracurricular activities.
- Strengthen the visibility and accessibility of school psychologists through regular classroom engagement, awareness sessions and confidential drop-in opportunities, helping students build trust before problems arise, responding to the study's finding that many students are reluctant to seek help or are unaware of available support services.
- Reflecting the finding that girls are markedly uncomfortable confiding in class teachers while boys are more likely to be entirely closed off from professional support such as school psychologists, promote whole-school approaches that engage girls and boys together in challenging harmful gender norms, fostering respectful relationships and preventing violence both online and offline.
- Reflecting the study's finding that social embarrassment and low confidence in institutional responses - rather than fear of family - are the main barriers that discourage students from reporting online violence, harassment and other forms of abuse, strengthen school capacity to prevent and respond to these incidents by ensuring that teachers and school staff receive regular training, that students are informed about reporting mechanisms, and that schools cooperate closely with psychologists, parents and relevant protection services.

Ministry of Internal Affairs and Kosovo Police

- Given the study finding that online harassment is common and gendered, with girls facing more severe, reputation-based harm, strengthen child-friendly procedures for responding to online gender-based violence, ensuring that children receive timely protection, clear information and appropriate referrals.

- Given the finding that adolescents' awareness of the law outpaces their knowledge of where and how to report online abuse, increase awareness of cybercrime reporting mechanisms available to children, particularly regarding image-based abuse, fake profiles, online blackmail and other forms of online exploitation.
- Responding to the finding that many adolescents doubt the police take reports seriously or that reporting changes anything, strengthen cooperation between cybercrime units, schools and child protection services to ensure coordinated responses when children experience online violence.

Centers for Social Work

- Recognising that parents are adolescents' primary source of support, while communication on relationships, consent and online experiences remains limited, strengthen preventive family support services by expanding evidence-based parenting programmes that promote positive parenting, gender-equitable caregiving, open communication and adolescents' emotional wellbeing.
- Recognising the study's finding that support pathways for adolescents remain fragmented - with school psychologists and reporting mechanisms known but underused amid uncertainty about where to turn - strengthen multidisciplinary case management by ensuring that Centers for Social Work actively coordinate responses with schools, health services, police, prosecutors and civil society organisations to provide timely, comprehensive and child-centred support.
- To address the study's finding that fear, stigma and limited trust in institutions discourage adolescents from reporting violence, increasing the likelihood that cases remain hidden, strengthen the role of Centers for Social Work in supporting schools and other frontline professionals to proactively identify children at risk, provide early intervention and ensure coordinated referral and protection responses.
- Given that institutional trust emerged as one of the strongest determinants of adolescents' willingness to seek help, establish mechanisms to regularly collect children's feedback on their experiences with social protection services and use this evidence to continuously strengthen service quality, accessibility, confidentiality and responsiveness.

Agency for Gender Equality

- Use the findings of this study to strengthen the implementation of national gender equality policies and strategies, ensuring that adolescents are

systematically included in efforts to prevent gender-based violence and discrimination.

- Recognising the study's finding that traditional gender roles remain dominant, with most adolescents endorsing a male-provider/female-homemaker model and boys consistently more traditional than girls, promote gender-transformative initiatives that engage both girls and boys, recognising that harmful gender norms affect adolescents differently while contributing to broader gender inequalities.

Agency for Information and Privacy

- Given the study finding that non-consensual sharing of private images is among the forms of online harm experienced by adolescents, strengthen public awareness of children's digital privacy rights, including the risks associated with sharing personal information and intimate images online.
- Responding to the finding that many adolescents are unsure where to seek help when their rights are violated, develop child-friendly information explaining available complaint mechanisms and digital privacy protections, ensuring adolescents understand their rights and where to seek assistance when those rights are violated.

Independent Media Commission

- Responding to the finding that online harassment is gendered and ranges from hurtful comments to image-based abuse, promote media and digital literacy initiatives that address online gender stereotypes, cyberbullying, image-based abuse and other forms of harmful online behaviour affecting children.
- Given the finding that girls face more severe, reputation-based harm and that fear of shame and judgement deters children from reporting, encourage responsible media reporting on gender-based violence involving children, avoiding victim-blaming narratives and protecting children's privacy and dignity.

Ombudsperson Institution

- Given the finding that shame and distrust deter reporting - fear of peer mockery being the leading barrier - and that most adolescents have never approached available support, strengthen children's awareness of complaint mechanisms and available remedies for violations of their rights, including online violence, discrimination and gender-based violence.
- Reflecting the finding that anonymous reporting was the most requested

improvement and that many adolescents distrust the confidentiality of reporting, continue promoting child-friendly complaint procedures that enable children to report concerns safely, confidentially and independently.

Parents, Caregivers and Families

- Given the study finding that family is children's first source of support - most often the mother, with girls notably more hesitant to confide in fathers - yet everyday conversations are often brief and infrequent, promote positive parenting approaches that encourage regular, open and non-judgemental communication about relationships, consent, online experiences and help-seeking.
- Given the finding that online harassment is a common experience among adolescents and that fear of blame and judgement deters help-seeking, support parents and caregivers in recognising online risks and responding constructively when adolescents disclose experiences of violence, harassment or exploitation, avoiding blame, punishment or excessive control.
- Reflecting the finding that traditional gender roles remain dominant and that girls' movements are more tightly monitored than boys', encourage equal participation of girls and boys in household responsibilities and decision-making, helping challenge traditional gender stereotypes within the family environment.

Civil Society Organisations

- Building on the study's findings that harmful gender norms remain widespread and that understanding of consent is uneven, develop peer-led programmes that engage girls and boys together in challenging harmful gender norms, promoting affirmative consent and strengthening digital safety.
- Building on the finding that adolescents' attitudes are beginning to shift towards greater equality, facilitate community dialogue involving adolescents, parents, educators and local institutions to promote respectful relationships, gender equality and violence prevention.
- Building on this study's approach of centring children's own voices - often underrepresented in research that relies on institutional or adult perspectives - continue participatory research and advocacy that meaningfully involves children in programme design, implementation and monitoring, recognising children's expertise in their own lived experiences.
- Given the persistent gap between existing legal and policy frameworks and their weak and uneven implementation, which disproportionately affects

marginalized groups such as Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian girls, children with disabilities and children living in poverty or rural areas, ensure that programmes deliberately reach children from rural areas, ethnic minority communities, children with disabilities and other groups facing barriers to information, participation and support services.

Cross-sectoral Recommendation

- Reflecting the study's central finding that trust is the decisive factor in whether children seek help, ensure that children and adolescents are meaningfully involved in the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies, programmes and services that affect them. Institutions should collaborate with Child-Led Groups (CLGs), organisations working with children and other child participation mechanisms to ensure that interventions are child-friendly, age-appropriate, gender-responsive and responsive to the diverse experiences and needs of girls and boys, including adolescents from marginalized groups.

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